PATTERNS OF POWER · ATHENS

ATHENS

A landscape and twelve modules · 594 · 508 · 462 · 322

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with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

PREFACE

What the study is for, how it was built, and the discipline it holds

The spine

Every other case in this collection is a conquest looked at from outside — an army arrives, a settlement is imposed, a story is told at home about why. This one is a conquest looked at from inside the conquering city, and the city in question is the one whose vocabulary the reader is using to think about all the others. *Democracy*, *politics*, *citizen*, *tyranny*, *economy*, *history* itself: Attic Greek, every one. That is the difficulty of the case and the reason for building it.

Athens was an ordinary imperial order in an unusual medium and an extraordinary internal one, and the two were the same arrangement. Three findings carry the study.

The first is that the floor of force was not an apparatus but a mobilisation, and almost everything peculiar to Athens follows from that. There was no standing army pointed at Athenians, no garrison, no political police — the entire permanent force available for civil use inside the city was some three hundred publicly owned foreigners with staves. What decided Athenian wars from 480 was a hull with a hundred and seventy oars in it, and those oars had to be found, paid and exercised every single spring. Nobody chose that. Bronze armour selects the men who can buy bronze; a trireme selects everyone, annually, forever. The one man who ever tried to build a real apparatus had to get the weapons out of the houses by a trick, at a staged assembly, because they were in the houses. From the distinction between an apparatus — held by someone, its composition chosen — and a mobilisation — the population itself, its composition dictated by the weapon — comes the periodicity that turned an occasional bargaining position into a standing account, the veto that broke an oligarchy in four months because the fleet was at Samos drawing its own pay, and the vulnerability that ended the whole thing: an arm that must be hired every year can be outbid, and in 407 a Persian prince at Sardis, asked at dinner what would gratify a Spartan admiral most, added one obol to the sailors' wage.

The second is that the liberties were participations rather than protections, which is why they could not be taken back. Cleisthenes did not grant the demos a right; he made the demos the Council. Ephialtes did not shield anyone from the Areopagus; he moved its jurisdiction into courts the demos staffed. Pericles did not

promise the poor access to office; he paid them to occupy it — and the *Athenaion Politeia* says why, without any sense that it is saying anything remarkable: he had been outspent by Cimon, whose farms were unfenced and whose door was open to any man of his deme, and being beaten in the matter of private possessions he was advised to give the multitude what was their own. Not one of those men was trying to make a liberty. Each was losing a factional fight and paid in the only currency his position allowed. But a share in the deciding cannot be withdrawn without the consent of the people who now hold it, which is why Athenian liberty absorbed two oligarchic coups and came back inside a year on both occasions, and why ending it in 322 required a Macedonian garrison in the harbour and a property line drawn at two thousand drachmas.

The third is that the achievement and the empire were one arrangement and not two, and the study's work has been to find the joints. Follow the money through the constitution. The naval wage that made the poorest citizen decisive was paid out of tribute assessed at Athens. The jury pay — without which a poor man cannot sit, and without which nothing else in the system functions — came from a treasury the allies had filled. Some of the land was Chalcidian and Lesbian and Aeginean. The grain that fed a population well above what Attica could carry came from other people's islands and later from the Pontic steppe, bought with silver dug by twenty to thirty thousand purchased foreigners in shafts fifty metres deep, and delivered along a sea lane the fleet existed to keep open. Remove the empire and you do not get Athenian democracy minus a regrettable annexe. You get a poor Attic farmer on a plot too small to keep a household, which is exactly what Athens had in 600 and had again after 322.

And yet the democracy was not *caused* by the empire, and the study says so where the evidence forced it. In 508, with no fleet in existence and no naval wage, the Athenian people besieged a Spartan king on the Acropolis and drove him out of Attica. The formulation that survives is narrower and harder than either the celebration or the debunking: **the democracy was not caused by the empire, but its radical form — paid, universal, continuous participation sustained daily for a century and a half — was funded by it, and the funding is not separable from the thing funded.** A man cannot sit on a jury a hundred days a year unless somebody pays him for those days, and the somebody was Samos.

How it was built

One module at a time, verification before writing, over the arc the Field Manual sets: a landscape and twelve modules, each with a framework function, each returning a refinement rather than merely applying the framework.

Public-domain primary sources are quoted exactly, in the original where the wording carries the argument, with translation — Solon's own verse on the boundary markers he pulled up and the land he refused to redistribute; Thucydides on Theseus *compelling* the Attic communities into one city, and on the empire held as a tyranny; the *Athenaion Politeia* on loans made upon the body and on jury pay as a counter to Cimon's wealth; Herodotus on Cleisthenes *being worsted* and taking the people into his own club; the tribute decree requiring every subject city to bring a cow and a suit of armour to the Panathenaia and process in the manner of colonists; Aristophanes explaining from the stage that he may speak freely because it is the Lenaia and the allies have not yet come; Xenophon on the obol added at Sardis and on the walls coming down to the music of flute-girls. Inscriptions are cited from the texts and translations at Attic Inscriptions Online. Modern copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Contested figures are given as ranges, and in this case that is most of them.

Where the study failed, it says so on the face of the module. The hypothesis it was built to test — carried over from the companion study of Sparta, that liberty tracks the manning requirement of the decisive arm — broke in Module 1 against the events of 508/7 and was left broken there, in the open, for seven modules before Module 8 rebuilt it in a narrower form that the evidence supports: the manning requirement does not produce liberty, it produces a standing account and a veto, and the veto is exercisable only when the manned arm is somewhere the plotters are not. Finley's thesis that freedom and slavery advanced hand in hand is given at full strength in Module 2 and then given its objections, and is not resolved, because the chronology will not carry the strong form.

And the sources not read are named here rather than concealed. This study was built from web-accessible material and from the primary texts. The foundational modern works are used at second hand throughout and none of them was consulted directly: Hansen on the institutions and demography of the democracy, Meiggs on the empire, Gabrielsen on the financing of the fleet, Moreno and Garnsey on the grain supply, Rhodes's commentary on the *Athenaion Politeia*, Ober on popular rule, Osborne on archaic Attica. Where two specialists disagree — Moreno and Garnsey on the size of the grain deficit, for instance — the disagreement is reported rather than adjudicated, because adjudicating it would require reading them. Population figures are the weakest load-bearing element in the whole study and are flagged wherever they

carry weight. Athenian women appear in these modules only as an exclusion, which is a limitation of the study and not of the subject.

The discipline

Legibility is not pardon.

The Athenian poor really could judge a general and vote to fine him; a man's body really could not be pledged for a loan or broken to produce evidence; a farmer from a coastal deme really could hold the seal of the state for a night and a day, and something like half of them did. None of that existed anywhere else in the ancient Mediterranean and almost none of it existed anywhere at all for the next two thousand years. It has to be said flatly, because a study that cannot credit what an order actually achieved has stopped measuring anything.

The men in the stone quarries at Syracuse were given two measures of grain and one of water a day for eight months, and most of them died there. The men of Melos who were of military age were killed and their wives and children sold, by a vote, on an afternoon. Twenty to thirty thousand people dug silver in the dark under a lease with a clause requiring the lessee to fill all vacancies as they occurred. That has to be said flatly too, because a study that swallows an order's account of itself has stopped being a study.

The same assembly voted for both, with the same hands, on different afternoons.

Both columns stand. Neither cancels the other. Carrying both at once is the whole of the method.

The arithmetic is laid out. The sum is left to the reader.

THE ARC

The landscape and the twelve modules, and the framework function of each

Landscape · Because the Soil Was Thin. The ground before the sequence begins — a peninsula whose sacred claim never to have been anybody's conquest turns out, in the hands of its own historian, to be a valuation of the real estate; and the two conquests that claim had already covered over.

1 · What Had Become of Their Weapons. *The floor of force.* An order with almost no coercive apparatus pointed at its own members, the thirty-six years when one man built one, and the change of decisive arm that put tens of thousands of propertyless men on the water every spring.

2 · Two Minae a Year for Each Lot. *The settlement.* A lawgiver who took the Athenian body out of the market and left the land exactly where it lay — and, a hundred and sixty-seven years later, the same dependency rebuilt on Lesbos with an Athenian collecting.

3 · A Cow and a Panoply. *The robe.* Two garments cut for two audiences, why the second was never meant to persuade, and what it costs to make a man believe that he is the thing itself.

4 · For One Night and One Day. *Formation.* A city with no schools that produced the most politically competent population in the ancient world, and the rota that did it.

5 · And Filled All Vacancies as They Occurred. *The cost column.* Five ledgers inside one order — citizen, farmer, metic, slave, subject — and the single variable that sets them all, which is the door.

6 · To Avoid Having to Leave Their Homes. *Extraction.* Three tiers of taxpayer sorted by what was levied on them, and the conversion of a service obligation into a cash payment that closed a door nobody was trying to close.

7 · We Are by Ourselves at the Lenaea. *Information and suppression.* An empire that carved its accounts in marble and hid nothing from anybody, the one thing it did police, and the season in which it could be said.

8 · Who Also Suffered Most Severely. *Elite coordination and the default.* Why a class taxed by the poor and judged by the poor spent a century defending the arrangement, the one thing the poor never took, and the thirty months in which the arithmetic inverted.

9 · To Give the Multitude What Was Their Own. *Plurality or foreclosure.* The four losing aristocrats who created Athenian liberty without meaning to, the group nobody ever needed and so never admitted, and the afternoon the protections failed.

10 · Add an Obol to the Sailors' Pay. *Change and collapse.* The largest slave population in Greece and the most capable poor citizenry in the ancient world, neither of which changed anything; and the sixth of a drachma that cost Athens the Aegean.

11 · A Pint of Barley Meal, Half a Pint of Water. *The grim accounting.* The sword ledger and the metabolic one, a population carried above its land by other people's soil and other people's bodies, and why the forgetting was so complete.

12 · The School of Hellas. *Convergence and divergence.* Where the case is ordinary and where it is not, what the pairing with Sparta actually tested, and the strongest argument against everything above — stated in full and answered.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

BECAUSE THE SOIL WAS THIN

Landscape · Attica and the Aegean around 600 BC, before the sequence begins — the ground that set the terms, the claim of having come from nowhere, and the conquests that claim had already covered over

The country and what it could carry

Begin with the ground, because the ground set the terms and every man in this study was standing on it.

Attica is a triangular peninsula of roughly two thousand four hundred to two thousand five hundred square kilometres — large for a Greek city's territory, several times what Corinth or Megara held, and not on that account a rich country. Three small plains, the Athenian plain about the city, the Thriasian plain out toward Eleusis, and the Mesogeia behind Hymettus, lie separated by limestone ridges: Parnes to the north, Pentelicus and Hymettus east and south-east, and beyond them the mineral hills above Thorikos and Laurium. The most generous modern estimates put the cultivable fraction at somewhere between a third and two fifths of the whole, and that upper figure only reaches two fifths by counting ground so poor it would carry a cereal crop once in several years; since biennial fallow was the normal practice, the land actually under grain in any given season was nearer half of even that. What grew well was barley, the olive and the vine. Wheat grew badly. On the comparative statistics Peter Garnsey worked from, the wheat crop at Athens fails something like four years in ten while barley fails about one in ten — which is the difference between a staple and a wager.

Set against that a coastline wholly out of proportion to the interior — Phaleron and the Piraeus headland, Sounion at the point, Thorikos and Brauron and Marathon along the eastern shore, Eleusis and the Salamis channel to the west — and the shape of the problem is visible from the air. Attica is a country whose land will feed a modest population and whose sea will reach anywhere at all. That is the material fact beneath everything that follows, and nobody chose it.

The silver was there as well, and had been touched for a very long time: lead-isotope work ties Bronze Age metal from the Acropolis, the Agora and Mycenae itself to the Laurion ores, and there is evidence of activity around Thorikos running back into the third millennium. But in 600 no one had found the seam that would matter. Systematic mining belongs to the late sixth century, and the rich body beneath the old

workings was not struck until 483. For the men in this landscape the hills above Thorikos were a place where lead was got. The fortune under them was not in anybody's field of view, which is a fact worth holding, because a great deal of what those men decided will look short-sighted only to a reader who knows what was down there.

The claim of having come from nowhere

The Athenians said of themselves that they had never come from anywhere. They were *αὐτόχθονες*, sprung from the soil they stood on — the only Greeks, on their own account, who were not immigrants into their own country.

The claim survives most sharply in a scene Herodotus sets at Syracuse on the eve of the Persian invasion, where Athenian and Spartan envoys are haggling with Gelon over the command of the Greek fleet, and the Athenian refuses to yield it: *ἀρχαιότατον μὲν ἔθνος παρεχόμενοι, μοῦνοι δὲ ἐόντες οὐ μετανάσται Ἑλλήνων* — "putting forward the most ancient nation, and being the only Greeks who are not migrants." Note where the sentence sits. It is not a hymn. It is an argument in a negotiation over who commands ships, produced because the man producing it expects it to be worth something to the other party. That is the condition of a legitimating claim that has fully matured: it has become tender, spendable in rooms where the business is force.

It is also the exact inverse of what the Spartans eighty miles away said about themselves. The Spartan story was the return of the Heraclidae — we came, we conquered, and the conquest was lawful because the land had been our ancestor's and we were taking back what was granted. That story admits an arrival and justifies it. The Athenian story admits no arrival at all. Two neighbouring orders in one language, each with a founding account, and the accounts are mirror images; and the interesting question is not which was true but what each was for.

What makes the Athenian version remarkable is that the Athenians' own historian took it apart while reporting it. Thucydides gives the reason for the continuity, and his reason is not divine favour: *τὴν γοῦν Ἀττικὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον διὰ τὸ λεπτόγεων ἀστασίαστον οὖσαν ἄνθρωποι ᾤκουν οἱ αὐτοὶ αἰεί* — "Attica at any rate, being for the most part free from civil strife on account of the thinness of its soil, was inhabited always by the same people." He has just explained the general rule: the best land always changed hands most often, because good ground made particular men powerful, which bred faction at home and invited attack from abroad. Attica escaped both because it was not worth the trouble. The most sacred fact an Athenian knew about himself — that he alone had never been anybody's conquest — turns out, in the hands of an Athenian

writing about Athens, to be a valuation of the real estate. Nobody came, because there was nothing here worth coming for.

Nor is the claim, on the record's own showing, even quite true. Herodotus, who lived at Athens in its greatest years, reports without embarrassment that the settlers who went out to Ionia from the prytaneion of Athens, the ones who reckoned themselves the purest Ionians of all, brought no women with them and married Carian girls whose fathers they had killed — and that the women bound themselves and their daughters by oath never to eat with their husbands or speak their names. The same tradition that says the Athenians never moved says that the Athenians founded twelve cities across the sea by killing the men who lived there. The two halves did not have to be reconciled, because in the fifth century they were doing different work: autochthony proved that no Athenian's title to Attic soil rested on anyone's grant, and the Ionian foundation proved that the Ionians of Asia were Athenian children, from which certain things would later follow about tribute. It is not hypocrisy. It is two claims addressed to two audiences by people who had never needed to hear them side by side.

What the claim covered: the rock

Directly beneath the classical Athenian's feet, when he stood on the Acropolis, was the residue of an order he could see and could not read.

Late Bronze Age Athens held a palace on the rock: a megaron of which a limestone column base and a few steps survive, ringed from about 1300–1200 by a Cyclopean circuit — the wall the Athenians called Pelasgian — of unworked blocks fitted without mortar, some ten metres high in places and three and a half to six thick, with a fortified descent cut to a spring so the citadel could be held through a siege. That is not a village. It is the apex of a redistributive state with a king in it, a state that kept accounts in a syllabic script and then stopped, when the palace system across the Aegean failed around 1200 and the writing went with it. Athens seems not to have been sacked as other centres were; it declined instead, and people from ruined places came to it. Four centuries later nobody in Attica could read Linear B, or knew it had existed.

What the classical Athenians made of the wall is the most useful thing about it. They attributed such masonry to the Cyclopes, because no arrangement of men they could imagine had lifted those stones. A conquest state's fortification had passed so far out of history that it had been reassigned to giants — which is the completed form of what happens to any built thing given enough undisturbed generations. It stops being an act and becomes a feature of the world. The Athenian walking past it was not misinformed about the wall; he simply had no category in which a wall could be a political fact. It was landscape.

What the claim covered: the twelve towns

The second thing the claim covered is a good deal harder to miss, because Athens celebrated it once a year.

Thucydides, again, in the passage where he explains why the country people so hated being brought inside the walls in 431: in the time of Cecrops and the kings before Theseus, he says, the people of Attica lived in their own towns, each with its own council-chamber and its own magistrates, and did not go to the king for counsel unless they were frightened of something; each town administered itself and deliberated by itself. Some of them fought their own wars — as the Eleusinians did, with Eumolpus, against Erechtheus. Then Theseus came to the throne, and being powerful as well as intelligent, *καταλύσας τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων τά τε βουλευτήρια καὶ τὰς ἀρχάς* — "having dissolved the council-chambers and the magistracies of the other towns" — appointed one council-chamber and one prytaneion, settled them all together, and, leaving each to enjoy his own property as before, *ἠνάγκασε μιᾷ πόλει ταύτῃ χρῆσθαι*: compelled them to use this one city.

Dissolved. Compelled. This is Athens's own account, by Athens's most exacting historian, of how Athens came to exist: the abolition of a dozen self-governing communities' governments and their forced consolidation under one. And the city kept a public festival for it. The Synoikia, in Hekatombaion, honoured the goddess and the founder and commemorated precisely this — the day the other councils were closed. An annexation had become a holiday.

The historical shape behind the myth is contested and the contest matters. Ancient chronography put Theseus in the thirteenth century; the archaeology does not support a Bronze Age unification of Attica, and the working consensus dates the effective political coalescence to the eighth and seventh centuries, as a process rather than an act — probably several acts across several generations, with independent centres like Eleusis and Marathon losing their autonomy at different times. Eleusis is the last piece and its date runs the full range of the scholarship, from the early eighth century through around 700 and into the seventh, with one recent line of argument holding that religious integration began in the seventh century and full political incorporation waited until the end of the sixth, when Eleusis became an Athenian deme. So the Theseus story is a retrojection: a slow swallowing of a peninsula, compressed into one heroic afternoon and given a founder.

Two disciplines apply here at once and they pull in opposite directions, which is why both have to be stated.

The first is that this was a conquest and should be named one. Attica was not a natural unit that discovered itself. It was a set of communities with their own

magistrates and their own wars, and they stopped having those things because a stronger centre took them away.

The second is that by 600 this had entirely ceased to be a conquest in any sense a person living through it could have used. The man farming near Brauron did not experience himself as a subject of Athens; he experienced himself as an Athenian, which he was. The tribes and phratries and clans through which he reckoned his kin, the festivals that scored his year, the goddess on the rock — all of it was simply how the world was arranged, and it had been how the world was arranged for as long as anyone's grandfather could report. Naming the origin does not make the thing false. It is precisely because the earlier consolidation had *worked* — had gone all the way down into how people understood themselves — that Athens in 600 could hold two and a half thousand square kilometres with no garrison anywhere in it, no permanent army, and a handful of magistrates. That is what a completed build looks like from the inside, and it is the cheapest form of order there is.

Eleusis, and what a conquest looks like when it has worked

Eleusis is worth its own paragraph, because it shows the whole mechanism in one institution that outlasted everything around it.

Eleusis was an independent town some twenty-two kilometres west of Athens, on its own plain, with a sanctuary of Demeter that goes back to Mycenaean cult activity in the building excavators call Megaron B. The tradition remembers the two places at war, and remembers who died: Erechtheus king of Athens and Eumolpus of Eleusis, or Eumolpus's son. Athens won. Eleusis lost its independence.

What Athens did next is the point. It did not suppress the cult, and it did not replace the priests. The two Eleusinian families, the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes, kept the great hereditary offices of the Mysteries; the hierophant — the man who showed the sacred things — was always a Eumolpid, and the last legitimate holder of the office, before the sanctuary was destroyed in 396 CE, still traced his descent from Eumolpus. Roughly a thousand years after the annexation, the descendants of the defeated were still performing the rite, and the rite was now the most prestigious religious property the Athenian state possessed, regulated in Athens by the archon basileus and celebrated with a procession that walked the Sacred Way out from the city to the sanctuary of the town Athens had beaten. The same move recurs across the peninsula: Artemis of Brauron acquired a branch on the Acropolis, and the statue of Dionysus was brought to Athens from Eleutherae when Eleutherae was absorbed.

Read this from the position of whoever was making the decision and it is not mysterious at all. A conqueror who razes a cult destroys a coordinating institution that

took centuries to build and gets nothing but a hole where it stood; a conqueror who keeps the priests and moves the calendar to his own capital acquires, at no cost, a body of trusted authority that somebody else already earned. The Eleusinian priesthoods were not spared out of piety. They were the cheapest thing on the table. And the arrangement held for a millennium because it gave the losing families a reason to defend it: their standing in the new order was better than their standing had been in the old one, since the hierophancy of a village cult is a smaller thing than the hierophancy of the Athenian empire's showpiece mystery. Nobody had to approve of the conquest. They only had to prefer the arrangement to its collapse.

The men who held it

By 600 the country was held by a class the sources call the Eupatridai — the well-fathered.

The apparatus was simple and it was closed. Descent was reckoned through *genē*, clans with priestly rights attached, grouped into phratries, grouped into the four old Ionian tribes. Office ran through birth: the archonship, once held for life and then for ten-year terms, had become annual by tradition in 683/2, and it remained restricted to men of the right families. Ex-archons passed for life into the council on the hill of Ares, the Areopagus, which supervised the laws, tried homicide, and possessed an authority the sources describe as general and ill-defined — which is usually what authority looks like when nobody has had to write it down because nobody has successfully challenged it.

Set that against the land and the picture is of a single undivided apex. The same families held the great estates, filled the magistracies, sat on the council for life, and owned the priesthoods. There was no independent temple hierarchy standing apart from the landowners, because the landowners' clans held the hereditary priesthoods; there was no separate martial class, because the men who fought in the front rank were the men who could afford the armour, who were the same men; and there was no written law until Draco, which meant the interpretation of custom was itself an aristocratic possession. Force, wealth, and the authority to say what was true and lawful sat in one set of hands. Whatever else can be said about archaic Attica, nothing in it checked anything else.

The men underneath

For the men below, the record is thin and hostile and third-hand — everything we have was written two to three centuries later, by men of the class that had done the holding — but what it says is unusually specific.

The *Athenaion Politeia* describes the position before Solon in a single dense sentence: the constitution was oligarchical in every respect, and in particular *ἐδούλευον οἱ πένητες τοῖς πλουσίοις καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες* — "the poor were enslaved to the rich, themselves and their children and their wives." They were called *pelatai* and *hektemoroi*, sixth-parters, because it was on that rent that they worked the fields of the rich; *ἡ δὲ πᾶσα γῆ δι' ὀλίγων ἦν*, "the whole land was in the hands of a few"; and if they failed to render the payments, they and their children became liable to seizure. Then the clause that carries the arrangement: *οἱ δανεισμοὶ πᾶσιν ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασιν ἦσαν* — "loans for everyone were on their bodies." Not on land, not on a crop, not on a pledge. On the person. A man who borrowed staked himself, and the market in which he was sold if he defaulted extended overseas.

Two things about this are disputed and should be given as disputed. The first is arithmetical: *hektemoros* means sixth-parter, and the ancient lexicographers gloss it as those who pay a sixth, which is the majority view; a minority reading, reflected in some older reference works, takes them to have retained a sixth and surrendered five, which would make the burden crushing rather than merely heavy. The second is causal. It is usually assumed the hektemoroi were insolvent debtors created by a credit crisis, but Aristotle and Plutarch do not actually call them debtors, Solon never mentions them in the surviving poems, and Antony Andrewes argued influentially that the status was an old and traditional dependency rather than the product of any recent lending — a condition that had been tolerable for generations and had lately stopped being tolerable. On that reading the crisis of 600 is not that the burden rose but that the men bearing it changed their minds about it, which is a different and more interesting thing.

Either way the mechanism is legible and it is the ordinary one: a class with all the land, no written law it did not administer, and a lending relation whose collateral was the borrower. Where the boundary stones called *horoi* stood on a plot, some obligation ran with the ground.

The door that was not there

Now the fact that makes archaic Attica strange, and that the framework should have predicted.

Across the eighth and seventh centuries the Greek world discharged its surplus outward on a scale that reshaped the Mediterranean. Chalcis founded Naxos, Leontini and Catana; Corinth founded Syracuse and Corcyra; the Achaeans founded Sybaris, Croton and Metapontum; Megara founded Chalcedon and Byzantium at the mouth of the Black Sea; Miletus founded a great deal of the Black Sea coast besides. These were mostly coastal states with fertile but limited territory and a habit of dividing land among heirs — that is, states manufacturing more claimants each generation than they had places for, and sending the remainder over the horizon.

Athens sent out no colony before the very end of the seventh century. Argos, similarly, sent none at all. This is a real anomaly in a period whose standard explanation for colonisation is population pressure, since the archaeological indication for that pressure — a sharp rise in the number of burials — is drawn largely from Attica and the Argolid, precisely the two places that did not colonise.

The explanation the archaeology supports is that Attica had an internal frontier and used it. Through the eighth century the Attic countryside was in effect settled from the centre outward; the peninsula filled up. Athens did to Attica what Sparta did to Messenia, in a milder key and without the conquest of a foreign people — it expanded into ground it already claimed rather than shipping men abroad. And that worked, as an outlet, exactly until the ground ran out.

By 600 it had run out. There was no more Attica. And the pressure that Corinth and Megara had been venting into Sicily and the Propontis for a century and a half had nowhere left to go but downward, onto the men who worked the land — which is a fair description of what the *hektemoros* arrangement was. The one Athenian venture overseas belongs to this same moment and is not a colony at all: an Olympic victor named Phrynon took Sigeion, on the Hellespont, from the Mytilenaeans who had founded it, and Athens then fought a long war with Mytilene over it in which Alcaeus lost his shield and Phrynon lost his life to Pittacus's concealed net. When the dispute went to Periander of Corinth for arbitration, the Athenian case was that Athens had fought at Troy and helped destroy Ilion. The first Athenian foothold abroad was a seizure of somebody else's settlement, argued from the *Iliad*.

The pressure showing

It was already showing before Solon, in three places.

Around 632, an aristocrat and Olympic victor named Cylon, married to the daughter of Theagenes tyrant of Megara, seized the Acropolis with Megarian help and a following of his own, having asked Delphi and been told to take Athens during the greatest festival of Zeus. The city did not rise for him. He was besieged, escaped with

his brother, and his followers took sanctuary at the altars; the nine archons, under Megacles of the Alcmaeonids, brought them out and killed them. A hereditary pollution attached to the family — and it was still politically live two hundred years later, when in 432 the Spartans formally demanded that Athens drive out the curse, meaning Pericles, whose mother was an Alcmaeonid. Herodotus and Thucydides tell the story differently enough that scholars have suspected Thucydides of shielding the family. What matters here is the shape: an aristocrat with a foreign tyrant for a father-in-law tries to take the state, and his rivals destroy him and are permanently damaged by the manner of it. The threat to the order came from inside the order.

Eleven years later, in 621/0, in the archonship of Aristaechmus, Draco wrote down law. Only the homicide provisions survived Solon, and only in a copy: the Athenians re-inscribed them on stone in 409/8, and the fragmentary text opens *καὶ ἐὰμ μὲ 'κ προνοίας κτένει τίς τινα, φεύγεν* — the restoration is contested, and the sense is either "and" or "even if a man kills another not from forethought, he shall be exiled." The kings are to adjudge the killer, or the man who planned it; the ephetai give the verdict. Read that as a document of its moment and it is a state trying to get between families. Blood vengeance is being converted into procedure; the question of who may kill whom, and with what consequence, is being taken out of the household and put in a court. Whether this was written to restrain the aristocracy or to formalise its grip is exactly the sort of question the surviving evidence cannot settle, but the act itself is a tell: nobody writes law down while custom is working.

And there is the physical evidence. In the Phaleron Delta cemetery, excavations from 2012 onward uncovered, among fifteen hundred burials, a mass grave of some seventy-nine adult males laid in three trenches, tied in groups, their wrists manacled in iron — most of them young, most in good health at death. Two small jugs found by the legs of two of them date the deposit to the mid-to-late seventh century. Excavators suggested a link to the Cylonian aftermath and the suggestion travelled fast; it is not established, the chronology is tight rather than decisive, and other occasions for a mass execution existed. The identification is contested. The manacles are not.

The sea, and the arm that did not exist

Beyond Attica the Aegean was crowded and getting richer. Aegina, an island in plain view from the Athenian coast, was the local commercial power and would strike coin before Athens did. Corinth held the isthmus and the traffic across it, and its tyrant was respected enough that two states at war in the Troad asked him to judge between them. Megara, next door, was fighting Athens for Salamis — the island that closes the western bay — and had been winning. Miletus and the Ionian cities across the water

were the intellectual and commercial centre of the Greek world; Lydia stood behind them, and Egypt had opened to Greek traders at Naucratis. Beyond Lydia, though nobody in Attica had reason to think about it in 600, Persia was two generations from arriving.

Attica sat in the middle of all this with the goods it had: oil, and later pottery, and eventually silver. And it sat there with one thing conspicuously absent, which is the fact this landscape should end on.

There was no fleet. Athens in 600 had ships in the sense that any coastal state has ships, and it could put men on the water to fight for Sigeion or Salamis, but it had nothing that could be called a navy and no institution for manning one. Its decisive arm, such as it was, was what every Greek state's was: men who could afford their own armour, which meant men with land, which meant a few thousand at most. The great fact of the fifth century — that the Athenian state's power would rest on a hundred and seventy oarsmen per hull, tens of thousands of them, drawn from men who owned nothing, and that it would need them again every single year — did not exist, was not foreseen, and could not have been foreseen. The silver that would pay for it was still in the ground and undiscovered. The enemy that would make it necessary was still east of the Halys.

That is the field of view of the men whose decisions this study will follow. They could see a country that had stopped growing, a class that owned it, a population sinking into that class's possession, no outlet abroad, a recent attempt at tyranny, and a set of rivals close enough to see from the shore. They could not see the fleet.

Reading archaic Attica against the framework

The landscape confirms the framework's recursion in its setup and returns one refinement, which the study should carry forward and test rather than assume.

The confirmation first. The order the sixth century inherited was not an aboriginal baseline; it was a former consolidation naturalised past recognition — a dozen self-governing communities whose councils and magistracies had been dissolved and whose descendants, by 600, understood themselves without remainder as Athenians. The evidence for how completely it had taken is that the annexation had become a festival and a Bronze Age fortification had become the work of giants. And Eleusis supplies the cleanest instance in the corpus so far of the cheapest thing a conqueror can do when the conquered order has an institution with a seat in it: Athens did not destroy the Eleusinian priesthood, it kept it, and the losing families ran the winning state's most prestigious cult for a thousand years. Nobody needed to be persuaded. The families'

standing under the new arrangement was better than their standing under the old, and the arrangement was therefore defended by the very people it had defeated.

The refinement concerns the legitimating story, and it is this. The framework's account of the fictions a conquest reaches for has so far catalogued instruments an actor picks up at a particular moment — declaring occupied land vacant, declaring a grant a confirmation of what the grantee already held, declaring a collective holding divisible. Athens shows what such a fiction becomes when it has been believed for four hundred years, and it is a different kind of object. Autochthony is not an instrument anyone reached for; no Athenian assembly voted it and no lawgiver drafted it. It is the *long-run residue* of settlements successfully made and then forgotten, and its distinctive property is that it denies there was ever a settlement at all. A recognition fiction says: you already owned this. Autochthony says: there was never a moment at which anyone did not.

The consequence is worth stating plainly, because it will run through the whole study. A title that rests on a grant can be argued with on its own terms — the grant has a date, a grantor, a text, and a beneficiary, and any of the four can be attacked. A title that rests on having sprung from the ground has none of these, and to contest it is not to dispute a document but to deny a fact about the world. That is a stronger position, and it is convertible into other things: it is what will later make an Athenian's claim to Attic soil different in kind from a resident foreigner's, whatever the foreigner pays in tax; it is the ground on which membership can be narrowed by blood rather than by property; and, coupled to the companion claim that the Ionians of Asia went out from the Athenian prytaneion, it is the beginning of a warrant for taking their money. The proposition to hand forward and test is therefore that **the most durable form of a legitimating claim is one that has lost its own origin — that where a conquest can still be dated it can still be contested, and where it has been converted into a fact of nature the contest has no purchase.**

Two disciplines guard that proposition from misuse. It is not a debunking: the Athenians were not deceived men repeating a lie, and the peninsula they held really had been theirs and their fathers' as far back as memory ran, exactly as Thucydides said, and for the reason Thucydides gave. And it is not a verdict: that the soil was thin, and that the thinness bought Attica the continuity from which the claim grew, is a fact about limestone and rainfall, not a judgement on anybody. What the framework asks is only that both columns stay open — the claim and the arithmetic under it — so that when a later Athenian tells a Sicilian tyrant that his people alone among the Greeks are not migrants, the reader already knows what the sentence is being spent on.

A note on sources.

The exact quotations here are public-domain primary texts, given in the original with translation and verified against sources reproducing them. Thucydides 1.2.5 on Attica's thin soil (*λεπτόγεων*) and its unchanging inhabitants, and 2.15.2 on Theseus dissolving the council-chambers and magistracies of the other towns and compelling them to use one city (*καταλύσας… ἠνάγκασε μιᾷ πόλει ταύτῃ χρῆσθαι*), are quoted from the Greek text with the older public-domain English (Hobbes; Crawley) consulted. Herodotus 7.161 on the Athenians as the most ancient nation and the only Greeks not migrants (*μοῦνοι δὲ ἐόντες οὐ μετανάσται Ἑλλήνων*), spoken by an Athenian envoy to Gelon of Syracuse, and 1.146 on the Ionian settlers who took Carian wives whose fathers they had killed, are likewise quoted from the Greek with public-domain translations. The *Athenaion Politeia* 2.2 on the *pelatai* and *hektemoroi*, the land being in the hands of a few, and loans being made on the body (*ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασιν*), is quoted from the Greek with Kenyon's public-domain rendering beside it. The opening line of Draco's homicide law as re-inscribed in 409/8 (IG I³ 104) is given with its restorations flagged, since the text is fragmentary and the reading of the first clause — whether "and" or "even if" — is genuinely disputed; Draco's date of 621/0 in the archonship of Aristaechmus follows *Ath. Pol.* 4.1.

Figures and dates that the record contests are given as ranges and attributed. Attica's extent is given as roughly 2,400–2,500 km²; the cultivable proportion at one third to two fifths, following the debate between Garnsey, Osborne and Sallares as summarised in the modern literature on the Athenian grain supply, with the caution that the upper figure counts very poor ground and that biennial fallow halves the cereal area in any year; the wheat-versus-barley failure rates are Garnsey's, paraphrased. The date of the Attic synoikism is given as a process of the eighth and seventh centuries rather than an event, following the archaeological consensus against the ancient chronographers' thirteenth-century dating; the incorporation of Eleusis is given across its full scholarly range, from the early eighth century through the seventh and, on one recent argument, to political incorporation only at the end of the sixth. Cylon's coup is given as c. 632 with the range 636–624 noted in the scholarship. The Laurion evidence — Bronze Age and earlier working, systematic mining from the late sixth century, the rich strike of 483 — follows the lead-isotope literature (Gale and Stos-Gale and the subsequent reassessments) and the Thorikos excavations, paraphrased. The Phaleron Delta mass burial is reported as excavated: some seventy-nine manacled adult males in three trenches, dated by two seventh-century oinochoai, with the proposed connection to the Cylonian affair recorded as a contested hypothesis and not as a finding.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited rather than quoted: Antony Andrewes on the *hektemoroi* as an ancient dependency rather than a debt outcome, with Ste. Croix's correspondence on the question; the minority reading that the sixth-parters retained rather than paid a sixth, noted as a minority; the standard accounts of the Eupatrid monopoly of the archonship and the Areopagus; and the observation, current in the handbooks and argued from the burial record, that Athens and Argos are anomalous in sending out no colonies during the great colonising period, with internal settlement of Attica as the substitute outlet. Where the surviving testimony about archaic Attica is uniformly late — the *Athenaion Politeia* and Plutarch write two to three centuries after the events, from within the class that had done the holding — that limitation is stated in the text rather than smoothed over. The material on Solon, the settlement of 594, and the naval programme is deliberately withheld here and belongs to the modules that follow.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

WHAT HAD BECOME OF THEIR WEAPONS

Module 1 · The floor of force — an order that kept almost no coercive apparatus pointed at its own members, the thirty-six years when one man built one, and the change of decisive arm that put tens of thousands of propertyless men on the water every spring

The question that does not fit

The first thing to establish about any order is who held organised violence, by what founding act, and against whom. Asked of most cases the question answers itself: name the army, count it, find its pay records, locate its garrisons, and the shape of everything above it follows. Asked of Athens it produces an awkward silence, because for most of the two centuries this study covers there was no standing army in Attica, no garrison in the city, no fortress held against the population, no political police, and no permanent armed body drawing a wage to keep Athenians in order. The citadel on the rock had been a fortress once; by the fifth century it held temples. The only permanent armed force stationed inside Athens for civil purposes numbered in the low hundreds and consisted entirely of foreigners who were the property of the state.

This is not because Athens was gentle. Athens killed the male population of Melos and sold the women and children; it held a subject empire by naval terror; it worked men to death in silver mines twenty-five miles from the theatre. Force was abundant. It was simply not, in the main, pointed inward at the men who voted.

So the question has to be asked more precisely, and the way to ask it is to follow the weapons. Where were they kept, who could afford them, what did the decisive one require in order to work, and what happened on the one occasion when somebody tried to take them away? Answer that and the whole later argument about liberty has a physical basis rather than a moral one, because what will turn out to matter about Athenian politics is not that the Athenians loved freedom but that from about 480 the thing which decided their wars could not be operated without tens of thousands of men who owned nothing at all.

The arm you had to buy

Down to the Persian Wars the decisive Athenian arm was the same as every other mainland Greek state's: a phalanx of heavy infantry in which each man supplied his own equipment.

The panoply was a bronze helmet, a body corslet, greaves, a round shield of wood faced in bronze roughly a metre across, a thrusting spear and a short sword. It was a capital good. Estimates of its cost vary widely in the scholarship and rest on thin evidence, so no figure should be trusted; what is not in doubt is that it stood well beyond the reach of a man living hand to mouth, that it was heavy enough to require a servant to carry on the march, and that it descended in families like a plough or a house. Solon's census classes formalised what the equipment had already decided, the third class — the *zeugitai* — being the men whose land yielded enough to put them in the line. A state whose decisive force consists of men who can afford bronze has a politics bounded, without anyone deciding it, by the number of men who can afford bronze.

At Marathon in 490 that arm had its greatest day. Herodotus gives no figure for the Athenian force; later tradition puts it near nine thousand with a thousand Plataeans beside them, and the estimate is worth no more than its source. What Herodotus does give is the casualty count, and it is the sort of number that makes a legend: six thousand four hundred Persian dead, and one hundred and ninety-two Athenians. Those hundred and ninety-two were buried where they fell under a mound that still stands, and for the rest of the century *the men who fought at Marathon* would be the conservative reference point in Athenian argument — the generation that had won without ships, without pay, and without the poor.

But notice what this arm was not. It was not an apparatus. It had no barracks, no permanent command, no payroll, and no existence between campaigns; it was a list of names and a set of possessions distributed across a peninsula, and it assembled when called and dispersed when finished. That distinction — between a floor that is an *apparatus* and a floor that is a *mobilisation* — will do more work in this study than any other single fact, so it is worth fixing here at the start. An apparatus is held by somebody. A mobilisation is only the population, temporarily armed.

The thirty-six years

There is exactly one long stretch in which Athens did have force pointed at Athenians, and because it is the exception it shows the rule with unusual clarity.

Peisistratus seized power three times. The first, around 561/0, was done by a piece of theatre: he wounded himself and his mules, drove into the agora claiming to have

escaped an ambush, and the assembly voted him a bodyguard — Herodotus calls them club-bearers, and the *Athenaion Politeia* numbers them at fifty. Men with clubs are not an army. They are enough to seize the Acropolis on a particular morning against a citizen body that has not assembled, which is all he needed and all he got, because he was driven out within a few years. The second attempt, made in alliance with the Alcmaeonid Megacles and advertised by driving into the city beside a tall woman dressed as Athena, collapsed with the alliance.

The third time he came prepared, and the preparation is the interesting part. In exile he went north, to Rhaikelos on the Thermaic Gulf and then to the region of Mount Pangaion, where the silver and gold were; he grew rich there and hired mercenaries. In 546 he crossed to Eretria, landed at Marathon, and destroyed the Athenian levy at Pallene in a surprise attack made in the heat of the day while his enemies were sleeping and dicing. Behind him stood Lygdamis of Naxos, whom he afterwards installed as tyrant there, and troops paid out of Thracian metal.

That is a floor of force in the ordinary sense, and having taken it he set about making it permanent, by the three moves such a position always suggests. He took hostages from the leading families and lodged them out of reach on Naxos. He kept a standing bodyguard, said to have included Scythian archers. And he disarmed the citizens.

The *Athenaion Politeia* preserves how it was done, and the passage deserves to be read slowly, because it is the most concrete single fact in this module. Peisistratus called the people out under arms, as for a review. He began to address them, pitching his voice low so that they could not hear, and when they complained he told them to come up closer, toward the buildings on the north slope of the Acropolis. He then spoke at length. While he spoke, men appointed for the purpose gathered up the weapons the crowd had set down and locked them away in the buildings near the Theseum, and came and gave him a sign. He finished his speech, and then told the assembly what had become of their weapons — adding that they should not be surprised or downhearted, but go home and mind their own affairs, and leave public business to him.

Read that from his position and it is the correct move, made competently. He had mercenaries, silver, hostages and a bodyguard, and he still could not rule a country in which every propertied household kept a spear and a shield behind the door. So the weapons had to be got out of the houses, and because he could not do it by force he did it by a trick, using the one occasion on which the arms were all in one place and their owners were not holding them. The trick is the measure of the difficulty. A state with a real standing apparatus does not need to disarm its people cleverly; it does it with the apparatus. Peisistratus had to catch them looking the other way.

For all that, the tyranny was not a reign of terror and the sources do not describe one. He kept Solon's laws and the ordinary magistracies, ensuring his own men filled them; he lent to small farmers; he sent circuit judges into the countryside; he took a levy on agricultural produce — the *Athenaion Politeia* calls it a tenth, Thucydides a twentieth, and the discrepancy is unresolved — and spent it on aqueducts, temples, festivals and the fleet. He was, in the phrase the later sources keep reaching for, moderate. That is exactly what a man in his position should be, and it is not evidence about his character. A tyrant with mercenaries and no legitimacy is expensive to be; a tyrant whose subjects find the arrangement tolerable is cheap. The moderation is the economy of the position, whatever else it also was.

Who ended it, and who got the statue

The tyranny outlived Peisistratus by seventeen years and was ended twice — once in the Athenian story, and once in fact.

In 514, at the Panathenaic procession, two Athenians named Harmodius and Aristogeiton killed Hipparchus, the brother of the tyrant Hippias. Athens built its whole account of its own liberty on that morning. Bronze statues of the pair were set up in the agora — the first public statues Athens is known to have raised to individual citizens rather than to gods — carried off by Xerxes when he sacked the city in 480, and replaced within a few years by a second group from Critios and Nesiotes. Their descendants held the right to be fed at public expense in the prytaneion. Drinking songs sang that the two had made Athens a city of equal laws.

Thucydides, an Athenian, says flatly that his countrymen have this wrong, and says it twice. In his first book he uses it as his standing example of how little trouble people take over their own traditions: the mass of the Athenians believe that Hipparchus was tyrant when he was killed, and do not know that Hippias was the eldest of Peisistratus's sons and ruled, and that Hipparchus and Thessalus were his brothers. In his sixth book he sets out what happened. The quarrel was private and erotic: Hipparchus made advances to Harmodius, was refused, and retaliated by publicly insulting Harmodius's sister, excluding her from a role in a procession; the conspirators, panicking on the day, killed the man who had insulted them and not the man who ruled. Harmodius was cut down on the spot, Aristogeiton taken and killed. And the consequence was the opposite of liberation: Hippias, now frightened, ruled harder for four more years, executing and exiling, and the tyranny became for the first time genuinely oppressive.

What actually removed it was an army from Sparta. Herodotus gives the mechanism and it is not edifying either. The exiled Alcmaeonids contracted to rebuild the temple at Delphi after a fire and built it more handsomely than the specification required, in

marble where limestone was called for; and thereafter, on Herodotus's account, whenever a Spartan came to consult the oracle on any matter whatever, the Pythia's answer included the instruction to free Athens. The Spartans, who had no quarrel with the Peisistratids and were their guest-friends, eventually obeyed. A first expedition failed. A second, under King Cleomenes, marched overland in 511/10, besieged Hippias on the Acropolis, and expelled him.

Set the two side by side and let them stand. Athens's founding image of its own freedom is a bronze pair in the marketplace commemorating a killing that its own greatest historian says the public has misidentified, that arose from a sexual insult, and that made the tyranny worse. The thing that actually ended the tyranny was a Spartan army, procured by a bribe to an oracle, paid for by an exiled aristocratic family, on behalf of a state that would spend the next century as Athens's chief enemy. There is no need to draw a conclusion from that. The arithmetic is on the page.

The crowd that was already worth something

What happened next is the fact that most complicates the argument this study exists to test, and it should be stated at full strength rather than managed.

With Hippias gone the aristocrats fell to quarrelling, as they had before him. Herodotus names the two and gives the sentence that the whole corpus has been looking for: these men fell into faction over power, and Cleisthenes, getting the worst of it, *τὸν δῆμον προσεταιρίζεται* — took the people into his own faction, made the demos his *hetaireia*, his club. The *Athenaion Politeia* says the same thing in flatter language: being beaten in the clubs, Cleisthenes brought the people over, handing the constitution to the multitude. Both sources are describing a losing aristocrat recruiting a weapon.

Isagoras, losing in his turn, reached for a weapon of his own, and called in Cleomenes and the Spartan army a second time. The sequence Herodotus gives is precise. Cleomenes first sent word demanding the expulsion of Cleisthenes and everyone under the old Alcmaeonid curse, and Cleisthenes left of his own accord. Cleomenes then came in person with a force Herodotus explicitly calls not large, and drove out seven hundred Athenian households whose names Isagoras had supplied. He next tried to dissolve the council and put the offices into the hands of three hundred partisans of Isagoras. The council refused to be dissolved. Cleomenes and Isagoras seized the Acropolis. And then, in Herodotus's words, the rest of the Athenians banded together with one mind and besieged them for two days; on the third the Lacedaemonians among them left the country under truce. The Athenian supporters

of Isagoras, three hundred of them, were killed. Cleisthenes and the seven hundred households were recalled.

Take the measure of that. In 508/7 the ordinary population of Athens — with no fleet in existence, no naval wage, no property qualification met, and no leader present in the city — assembled, cornered a Spartan king on the Acropolis, and forced him out of Attica. Whatever else the demos was at that date, it was already something a losing aristocrat found worth recruiting and a foreign king could not simply brush aside. That is twenty-eight years before Salamis.

Any account that makes the fleet the *origin* of the Athenian poor's political weight has to answer this, and the honest answer is that it cannot. The weight was there first. What is true, and will matter enormously, is something narrower: an armed crowd is an event, and events do not build institutions. The men who besieged Cleomenes went home afterwards to their farms and their trades, and there was no reason for anything permanent to be built around them. The change that came later was not that the poor acquired leverage but that their leverage acquired a *schedule*.

The silver, and the ships

The schedule arrived by accident, out of a hole in the ground.

In 483/2 the mining district of Laurium, worked in a small way for centuries, yielded a body of ore far richer than anything previously struck there. The customary disposal of a mining surplus was a distribution to the citizens, and the sum proposed, on the *Athenaion Politeia*'s account, was ten drachmas a head. Themistocles proposed instead that the money go into warships, and the argument he used in the assembly, according to Herodotus, was not Persia but Aegina — the island in plain sight across the bay, with which Athens had been at war and which had the better navy. The assembly voted to forgo the dividend.

The size of the programme is disputed in the sources and should be given as disputed. Herodotus says two hundred ships. The *Athenaion Politeia* says a hundred talents were advanced to the hundred richest Athenians, a talent each, each man to build one trireme — which is a hundred ships, and also a rather elegant piece of financial engineering, since it converts a public windfall into a hundred private obligations to deliver a specific object. Hans van Wees has suggested the two can be reconciled if the hundred new hulls were added to a hundred already in existence, giving the two hundred that Herodotus assigns to the bill itself. The reconciliation is plausible and not certain.

What is certain is the outcome. In 480 the Greek fleet met the Persian at Salamis in the straits below the city the Persians had just burned, and won; and of the Greek ships,

considerably more than half were Athenian. Aeschylus, who fought in the war, put the Greek total at three hundred; Herodotus gives a higher figure. The Athenians had built, in under three years and for a quarrel with a neighbouring island, the instrument that would make them an imperial power.

And they had built, without intending to or noticing, a permanent claim on the bodies of their poorest citizens.

A hundred and seventy oars

The trireme is the whole argument, so its manning must be set out exactly.

A hull roughly thirty-seven metres long and five metres in the beam carried about two hundred men. A hundred and seventy of them rowed: sixty-two *thranitai* on the upper tier, pulling through an outrigger frame, with the longest oars and the hardest work; fifty-four *zygitai* below and inboard of them; fifty-four *thalamitai* in the lowest tier, just above the bilge, in the dark. Each man had one oar and a space something under a metre wide. The remaining thirty were the trierarch who commanded and paid, the helmsman, the boatswain who kept the stroke, the piper, the shipwright, ten or so deck hands, and a fighting complement — conventionally ten marines in armour and four archers, though the numbers varied and were higher at Salamis.

None of the hundred and seventy needed to own anything. He needed no armour, no weapon, no land, and no servant. He needed a wage, which by the middle of the fifth century was a drachma a day on campaign, sometimes three obols — Thucydides records a drachma a day for the force at Potidaea — and he needed practice, since a trireme is useless unless its crew can hold a stroke and turn together, which is why Athens sent out squadrons in peacetime for no other purpose than to keep the rowers in condition. The Old Oligarch's sneer that most Athenians could row the moment they stepped aboard because they had been doing it all their lives is a hostile witness confirming the point: this was an acquired skill held in the general population.

Now the arithmetic. Two hundred hulls fully crewed is thirty-four thousand rowers. Athens at its height had an adult male citizen body most plausibly estimated in the tens of thousands, and a full-strength fleet therefore could not be manned from citizens alone under any assumption. Van Wees calculates a maximum of about twenty-four thousand available from citizens and metics together. So the shortfall was met, in practice, from the allied cities, from resident foreigners, and from slaves — Thucydides records crewmen deserting from a trireme along with slaves off the same ship, and at Arginusae in 406, with the state at the end of its manpower, slaves were put on the benches and freed for it.

That is the institution. Not a battle but a requirement: a machine that had to be found, fed, paid and exercised every year, that consumed men in tens of thousands, that had no use whatever for a man's property, and that could not be operated at all by the class that had won Marathon. Nobody designed it as a constitutional measure. Themistocles was worried about Aegina.

What was pointed at the citizen

Against all that, set the force actually available inside the city for use on Athenians, because the contrast is the module's point.

Athens had a body of publicly owned slaves, conventionally called the Scythian archers, whose number the sources put at three hundred and, at some later point, as high as a thousand or twelve hundred. They camped in the agora and afterwards on the Areopagus. They kept order in the assembly and the courts and the markets, chivvied reluctant citizens up to the Pnyx, made arrests when magistrates told them to, and appear in Aristophanes speaking broken Greek. They worked for the Eleven, the board that ran the prison, held the confiscated goods, and carried out executions. There was nothing else: no watch, no investigators, no standing garrison, no secret service. Crimes were prosecuted by whoever chose to prosecute them. Modern scholarship, when it describes the Scythians as the only police force classical Athens ever knew, is also obliged to add that they were not a police force in the sense a modern reader will supply.

Hold the shape of that arrangement in view. The coercive instrument that stood between the Athenian citizen and disorder was itself a piece of property, owned by the men it policed, foreign, unfree, and comic. Whatever held the Athenian in his place, it was not three hundred slaves with staves.

And directly beside it stands the rule that shows where the community's edge was cut. In an Athenian court, a slave's evidence was not receivable as testimony unless it had been extracted under torture; the procedure was called *basanos*, the touchstone, after the stone used to assay gold. A citizen, by contrast, could not be tortured at all. There is a real scholarly argument about how often the procedure was actually carried through — in the forty-odd instances in the surviving speeches we have challenges issued and refused and no completed interrogation, which has led some to treat it as largely a rhetorical device, while others hold it was regularly used — and that dispute should be left open. It does not touch the point. The *rule* was the rule, and the rule says that the law sorted human beings into two classes by what could lawfully be done to their bodies. On one side of the line, procedure. On the other, the instrument.

That is where the floor of force at Athens actually was. Not above the citizen, pressing down, but around him, marking the boundary of the group he belonged to, and falling with its full weight on everyone outside it — on the slave in the court and the mine, and, from 478 onward, on the allied cities of the Aegean, which is where the fleet built for Aegina was very shortly pointed.

Reading the Athenian floor against the framework

The framework begins from the proposition that force is the founding fact and that belief is laid over it afterwards to make holding the order cheap; and it translates that into a ledger, in which the floor is the cost column — the credible enforcer that prices defection too high to choose. Athens does not refute this, but it does something more useful: it separates two things the formula runs together, and the separation should be carried forward.

Distinguish a floor that is an apparatus from a floor that is a mobilisation. An apparatus is a standing body of armed men with a payroll, a command, and a composition its holders select. A mobilisation is the population itself, temporarily under arms, assembled when needed and dispersed after. Both are organised violence and both decide wars; they behave completely differently in political terms, and the difference is that the composition of an apparatus is a *choice* and the composition of a mobilisation is a *technical fact*. Whoever holds an apparatus can decide who is in it, and will choose men whose interest is bound to his. Nobody decides who is in a mobilisation. The decisive weapon decides, by what it costs to own and how many hands it takes to work.

That is why the Athenian sequence runs as it does. When the decisive weapon was bronze armour, the arm consisted of the men who could buy bronze, and no political intention was required to produce that result — it was simply what the equipment cost. When the decisive weapon became a hull with a hundred and seventy oars in it, the arm consisted of every able-bodied man who could be found, because the equipment cost the rower nothing and the state needed him by the tens of thousands, annually. Themistocles did not extend the franchise by building ships. He bought ships to fight Aegina, using a windfall, against the alternative of a cash handout, and the constitutional consequences arrived later and were nobody's plan. This is what it looks like when a position hands a man a menu he did not write: the silver was struck, the neighbour had the better navy, and the cheapest answer available happened to require thirty thousand poor men every spring.

Which corrects, rather than confirms, the proposition this study was set up to test. The seed for this study proposed that liberty is a function of the manning

requirement of the decisive arm — that where a floor can be worked by a few, the few owe nobody anything, and where it can only be worked by the many, the many acquire a price. The events of 508/7 will not permit that in its simple form. There was no fleet in 508. There was no naval wage, no thetic mobilisation, and no institution through which the poor were organised. And the poor of Athens nonetheless besieged a Spartan king on the Acropolis and expelled him, having already, weeks earlier, been recruited into an aristocratic faction by a man who was losing and needed them. The leverage existed before the technology that is supposed to have created it.

What the fleet supplied was not leverage but *periodicity*. An armed crowd is an episode; it wins a day and goes home, and nothing is built around it, because nothing needs to be. A fleet is a standing annual account: the same men, in the same numbers, needed again next spring and the spring after, findable only if they are willing to be found, useful only if they have been kept in practice, and paid in coin from a treasury that must be filled. Institutions grow around recurring obligations, not around victories. The refinement to carry forward is therefore this: **a floor of force that must be re-mobilised on a schedule converts an occasional bargaining position into a standing one, and it is the standing version, not the occasional one, that leaves institutions behind it.** Whether that is what actually produced the Athenian constitutional changes is a question for the modules that follow, and the honest position at this stage is that the timing does not fit a simple story — Cleisthenes is 508, before the fleet; Ephialtes is 462, eighteen years after Salamis — and that a hypothesis which requires eighteen years of silence is a hypothesis under strain.

And note where the force went instead. The framework asks, of every order, who was disarmed and made unable to disperse. At Athens the answer for the citizen tier is *nobody, for most of the period, and the one man who tried had to do it by a trick*. The weapons were in the houses; Peisistratus needed mercenaries bought with Thracian silver, hostages held on an island, and a staged assembly to get them out; and within a generation of his family's fall the arms were back in the houses and stayed there. But the same order that kept no apparatus over its citizens maintained an exact legal machinery of bodily vulnerability for everyone else — the touchstone in the court, the shackle in the mine, and, shortly, the fleet in the harbours of sixty-odd allied cities. The absence of a floor over one population and its presence over another are not two facts about Athens. They are one fact, and the line between them is the same line the law drew when it decided whose body could be broken to produce evidence. Where that line sits, and what it cost to keep it there, is the subject of everything that follows.

A note on sources.

The exact quotations and close paraphrases of primary material here are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Herodotus 5.66.2 on Cleisthenes, worsted in faction, taking the people into his own party (*ἐσσούμενος δὲ ὁ Κλεισθένης τὸν δῆμον προσεταιρίζεται*), with the parallel in *Athenaion Politeia* 20.1; Herodotus 5.72 on Cleomenes' expulsion of seven hundred households, the council's refusal to dissolve, the seizure of the Acropolis, the two-day siege and the departure under truce on the third day; Herodotus 5.62–63 on the Alcmaeonid rebuilding of the Delphic temple in marble and the Pythia's repeated instruction to visiting Spartans to free Athens; Herodotus 6.117 for the Marathon casualties, 6,400 Persian and 192 Athenian; Herodotus 7.144 for the naval bill at two hundred ships and the Aeginetan argument; Herodotus 1.59 for the bodyguard of club-bearers. Thucydides 1.20 on the mass of the Athenians misidentifying Hipparchus as tyrant, and 6.54–59 for the erotic origin of the plot and the harshening of Hippias's rule afterwards; Thucydides 3.17 for pay of a drachma a day at Potidaea, and 7.13 for desertion of crewmen along with slaves. Aristotle, *Politics* 5.1304a20–25, for the naval multitude (*ὁ ναυτικὸς ὄχλος*) as the cause of the victory at Salamis and thereby of the sea-power and of a stronger democracy — verified in the Greek, since this study was set up partly to test that sentence. *Athenaion Politeia* 14.1 for the fifty club-bearers, 15.4–5 for the disarming at the Theseum, 16.4 for the tithe on produce, and 22.7 for the hundred talents lent to a hundred men and the foregone distribution of ten drachmas a head.

Where the sources disagree, the disagreement is given rather than resolved. The size of Themistocles' programme is a hundred ships in the *Athenaion Politeia* and two hundred in Herodotus; van Wees's reconciliation (a hundred new hulls added to a hundred existing) is reported as a plausible proposal, not a finding. Peisistratus's agricultural levy is a tenth in the *Athenaion Politeia* and a twentieth in Thucydides. The Athenian force at Marathon is not given by Herodotus and the conventional figure of nine or ten thousand rests on later authors; it is flagged as such. The cost of a hoplite panoply is left unquantified, because the surviving evidence is too thin to support the figures that circulate. The number of the Scythian archers is given as the sources give it, three hundred and later as many as a thousand or twelve hundred, with the caution that the whole reconstruction of this force rests on Aristophanes and on lexicographers writing many centuries later. The *basanos* rule is stated as law and its practical frequency left open, since Gagarin, Thür, Todd and Mirhady disagree sharply on whether completed interrogations occurred and no completed challenge survives in the forty-odd instances in the orators.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: van Wees on Athenian and metic naval manpower and on the reconciliation of the ship figures; the trireme reconstruction *Olympias* and the work of Morrison and Coates for the physical arrangement of the three banks at 62, 54 and 54; the current handbook position that the Scythian archers were the only civil force of the kind Athens possessed and were not a police force in the modern sense. Population figures for the Athenian citizen body are deliberately left as "tens of thousands" here and will be given with their ranges and their advocates where the argument requires them. The empire's use of the fleet against allied cities, the mines, and the census classes are named here only as far as this module needs them and belong to the modules that follow.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

TWO MINAE A YEAR FOR EACH LOT

Module 2 · The settlement — the lawgiver who took the Athenian body out of the market and left the land exactly where it lay, the register that replaced birth with a name in a book, and the second settlement, carved out of other people's countries and dealt to ordinary men by lot

What the instrument found

Before anything was settled there was a relation, and the relation has to be on the page or the settlement cannot be read.

The men who worked the fields of the rich in Attica around 600 were called *pelatai* and *hektemoroi*, sixth-parters. They worked land they did not own, or owned in some qualified way nobody can now reconstruct, and rendered a portion of what it produced to a wealthier man. Where the obligation ran, boundary markers called *horoi* stood on the ground. If a man failed to render, he and his children became liable to seizure. And underneath the whole arrangement lay the clause that made it work: loans were made on the security of the borrower's body.

That is not a property system. It is a relation between persons — a standing dependency of a poor Athenian on a rich one, expressed in soil and enforced by the possibility of sale. Nothing in it could be handed over as a thing, because there was no thing; there was a man, a plot, a render, and a stone. Whether the render was one sixth or five sixths is disputed and always has been, the ancient lexicographers glossing the word as those who pay a sixth and a minority modern reading taking them to have kept a sixth; whether the *hektemoroi* were insolvent debtors at all is disputed too, since neither Aristotle nor Plutarch calls them that and Solon never mentions them in the surviving verse, which led Antony Andrewes to argue that the status was an ancient and traditional one rather than the product of a credit crisis. Both disputes are live and neither can be closed here. What is not disputed is the shape: a dependency, marked on the ground, with a man's person as the ultimate collateral.

What Solon did, in his own words

In 594/3 — the traditional date, with 592/1 also defended — the Athenians made Solon archon and arbitrator with extraordinary powers, and he legislated. He also

wrote poems about what he had done, and because the poems were quoted by Aristotle and Plutarch they survive, which makes this one of the very few settlements in the entire corpus where the man who made it explains himself in his own metre.

The central fragment runs:

συμμαρτυροίη ταῦτ' ἂν ἐν δίκῃ Χρόνου / μήτηρ μεγίστη δαιμόνων Ὀλυμπίων / ἄριστα, Γῆ μέλαινα, τῆς ἐγώ ποτε / ὅρους ἀνεῖλον πολλαχῇ πεπηγότας, / πρόσθεν δὲ δουλεύουσα, νῦν ἐλευθέρα.

"In the judgement of Time may she bear me best witness — the greatest mother of the Olympian gods, dark Earth, whose boundary markers, fixed in many places, I once pulled up: enslaved before, now free."

He continues: he brought back to Athens many who had been sold away, one lawfully and another not, and others who had fled under compulsion of need, no longer speaking the Attic tongue, as men wandering far and wide will do; and those who suffered shameful bondage at home, trembling before their masters' whims, he set free. He did these things, he says, by fitting together force and justice — *ὁμοῦ βίην τε καὶ δίκην* — and he wrote laws alike for the low and the high, fitting straight judgement to each.

Set beside the relation it found, that is a precise operation. It abolishes the render, throws down the markers, cancels the obligations, frees those held in bondage inside Attica, and repatriates at public expense those already sold abroad — men who, in the most telling line in the fragment, had been away long enough to lose the language. And prospectively it forbids the clause underneath everything: no Athenian may thereafter borrow on the security of his own person.

There is a real scholarly argument about how much of this to believe, and it should be recorded rather than smoothed. Edward Harris has argued that the *Athenaion Politeia*'s "lending on the body" does not mean what Finley and others took it to mean, and that Solon did not abolish debt-bondage in the sense usually claimed. Others hold that the *horoi* Solon speaks of were boundary stones rather than mortgage markers and that the poem is more metaphorical than the later prose accounts assume. The dispute is genuine. But something was done that contemporaries and near-contemporaries recognised as the removal of a standing servitude, and the Athenians afterwards did not enslave one another for debt, which is a fact about the fifth century whatever happened in the sixth.

What Solon refused, in his own words

Now the other half, which is the half the framework actually needs, and which Solon states with equal clarity and rather more pride.

He did not touch the land. The men who had come to him expecting a redistribution he describes with contempt: they came for plunder, he says, each of them reckoning he would find great wealth, and supposing that behind my smooth words I concealed a hard purpose; they were deceived, and now they are angry with me and look at me askance as at an enemy. And then the refusal, plainly: it was not pleasing to me to act with the violence of a tyrant, nor that the base should have an equal share of the rich fatherland with the noble.

And in another fragment, the settlement's own summary: *to the demos I gave as much privilege as sufficed, neither taking away from their honour nor adding to it; and for those who held power and were admired for their wealth, I contrived that they too should suffer nothing unseemly. I stood casting a strong shield over both, and allowed neither to prevail unjustly.*

Read that as a document of position. Solon was, on all the ancient accounts, of the first rank by birth and the middling sort by wealth, chosen by both sides because neither could impose on the other. The arrangement he produced is what a man in exactly that position will produce: he removed the mechanism by which the crisis had been generating civil war, and he left the distribution of wealth that had generated the mechanism entirely alone. The revealed preference is unmistakable, and Solon does not hide it — the boast is addressed to the rich, in a poem the poor could also hear, and its content is *I refused to give them your land*.

The consequence is arithmetical and it will run through the next two centuries. A dependent man freed from his obligation, on a holding too small to keep a household, is not thereby a self-sufficient farmer. He is a free man with insufficient land. Attica had no more Attica to give him — the peninsula had been filled from the centre generations earlier, and Athens, alone among the major states of the archaic Aegean, had sent out no colonies. So the settlement of 594 created, in a single act, a body of legally free Athenians whose freedom was real and whose living was not.

Two things filled the gap. One arrived quickly and is the most consequential claim in the study. The other took a century and a half.

Bought foreigners

Moses Finley's formulation is the one everything since has argued with: *one aspect of Greek history, in short, is the advance, hand in hand, of freedom and slavery.* The mechanism he proposed is direct — that Solon's reforms inaugurated the Attic slave economy, because a community that will not enslave its own poor must buy the unfree from outside, and that chattel slaves were required to replace the dependent labour the reform had abolished.

It should be given at full strength because it may well be right, and it should be given with its objections because it is not established. Slavery in Attica did not begin in 594: Draco's homicide law mentions slaves, Solon himself legislated about them, and dependent and servile labour of various kinds is visible in the archaic evidence throughout the Greek world. The chronology is therefore not a clean before-and-after, and Finley's own case leans partly on Chios — which Theopompus called the first city to organise a trade in bought slaves and which also had an early broadening of its politics — a correlation of two cities rather than a demonstrated cause. What can be said without overreaching is that the two movements are visible in the same country in the same century, that the logic connecting them is not strained, and that by the fifth century Athens had converted a system in which Athenians were the dependent labour into one in which purchased foreigners were, with the citizen body standing above the line as a body of legally equal men. Whether the second was caused by the first or merely accompanied it, the pairing is the fact, and a study that treats Athenian freedom as though it floated free of it has written the wrong study.

A name in a register

The other half of the settlement is not about wealth at all. It is about the marker of who is inside, and it changed twice.

Before Solon the marker was birth: the Eupatridai, good fathers, holding office because of who their fathers were. Solon replaced it with a harvest. Citizens were sorted into four classes by annual produce — the *pentakosiomedimnoi* at five hundred measures of dry or wet, the *hippeis* who could keep a horse, put at three hundred, the *zeugitai* who could keep a yoke of oxen, put at two hundred, and beneath them the *thetes*. Magistracies were open to the upper classes only; the *thetes* were admitted to the assembly and to the courts and to nothing else. The figures should be held loosely: Ste. Croix argued that only the five hundred is genuinely Solonian and that the three hundred and two hundred are later reconstructions, and Rhodes doubts that Solon defined the lower classes by exact measures at all.

What matters is the change in kind rather than the numbers. A bloodline cannot be acquired. A harvest can. Once the qualification for office is a quantity of barley, the boundary of the settlement has been made permeable in principle, however narrow it remains in practice — and a family that grew rich in the sixth century, by trade or by mining or by a good marriage, could cross it.

Then, in 508/7, Cleisthenes changed the marker again, and this time to the thing the framework watches for above all others: a name in a book.

He abolished the political significance of the four old Ionian tribes and built a new frame out of localities. Attica was divided into roughly a hundred and thirty-nine demes — villages, coastal settlements, and neighbourhoods of the city — and each deme kept its own register, the *lexiarchikon grammateion*, into which a young man was entered at eighteen on the vote of his fellow demesmen. The demes were grouped into thirty *trittyes*, ten drawn from the city, ten from the coast, ten from the inland, and each of ten new tribes was assembled from one *trittys* of each kind, so that no tribe could be the political expression of one region or one great family's country. The council was raised to five hundred, fifty from each tribe, filled by lot with a fixed quota to each deme.

Two features of the register decide everything that follows. The first is that enrolment in it *was* citizenship: to be an Athenian was to have one's name in a particular deme's book, and a man was thereafter known by his own name, his father's, and his deme — Pericles son of Xanthippus of Cholargos. The second is that membership was hereditary and portable. A man was enrolled in his father's deme regardless of where he lived, so that within three generations the register bore no necessary relation to residence at all, and a family that had moved to the city in 500 was still, in 420, registered on the coast.

That is a membership card, kept by the members. It is also the instrument that makes possible everything the fifth century would later do with membership — the exclusion of resident foreigners who paid the same taxes, and the law of 451/0 that would require an Athenian mother as well as an Athenian father. You cannot narrow a body you cannot enumerate. Cleisthenes did not narrow anything; he built the list.

The other settlement

And then there is the second settlement, which the ancient sources describe with complete equanimity and which is, joint for joint, the instrument this corpus was built to read.

It began within two years of the register. In 506 Athens defeated the Boeotians and the Chalcidians on the same day, and Herodotus reports what followed: the prisoners were kept in fetters and eventually ransomed at two minae a head; the fetters themselves were hung up on the Acropolis, where Herodotus says he saw them still, on walls scorched by the Persian fire; a tithe of the ransom paid for a bronze four-horse chariot set inside the Propylaia; and on it was cut an inscription, which he quotes:

"Matched in the deeds of war with the tribes of Boeotia and Chalkis / The sons of Athens prevailed, conquered and tamed them in fight: / In chains of iron and darkness they quenched their insolent spirit; / And to Athene present these, of their ransom a tithe."

And Athens settled four thousand of its citizens on the land of the Chalcidian *hippobotai*, the horse-breeding gentry — the number is Herodotus's and has been suspected of inflation, though the settlement itself is not doubted. These men were *klerouchoi*: lot-holders, from *klēros*, a lot of land. They kept their Athenian citizenship, their enrolment in their demes, their vote, and their liability to Athenian service. They were not colonists founding a daughter city with its own laws and its own gods. They were Athenians holding foreign ground.

The instrument was used repeatedly for the next ninety years: on Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros; on Naxos and Andros; at Histiaea in northern Euboea in 446, where after the revolt the population was expelled and sold and two thousand Athenians were put on the land; on Aegina in 431, where the inhabitants were driven out and Athenians settled in their place; on Lesbos in 427; on Melos in 416, after the men of military age had been killed and the women and children sold, where Athens afterwards sent out settlers of its own. The individual figures are reported by single sources and should be treated as orders of magnitude rather than counts.

Two minae a year for each lot

Lesbos is the case that shows the mechanism naked, because Thucydides records the terms.

Mytilene revolted in 428 and was reduced in 427. The famous debate saved the general population from the decree that would have killed every adult male; rather more than a thousand men identified as ringleaders were executed anyway. Then came the settlement. The walls were pulled down and the ships taken. And — this is the clause — no tribute was imposed on the Lesbians. Instead all the land except Methymna's was divided into three thousand lots. Three hundred were set aside as sacred to the gods. The remaining two thousand seven hundred were assigned by lot to Athenian *klerouchoi*, who were sent out to the island. And the Lesbians themselves went on farming the land, paying two minae a year for each lot.

Two minae is two hundred drachmas. At the daily wage a skilled craftsman earned on the Erechtheum, or a rower drew on campaign, that is roughly two hundred days of a working man's pay, arriving annually, for doing nothing. And the man receiving it did not need to be on Lesbos to receive it; as the modern scholarship on Athenian settlement abroad puts it, cleruchs of this kind were less landholders than pensioners, and may often have gone on living in Attica. The archaeology of Athenian settlements overseas is correspondingly thin — no great temples, no infrastructure — because in many cases there was nobody much there.

Now set that arrangement against the one Solon abolished, because they are the same arrangement.

The *hektemoros* farmed land whose produce he did not wholly keep and rendered annually to a wealthier man, and a stone on the ground marked the obligation. The Lesbian farmed land whose produce he did not wholly keep and rendered annually — two minae, on a schedule, to a named Athenian holder — and a decree of the Athenian assembly marked the obligation. The relation Solon threw down inside Attica in 594 was rebuilt outside Attica in 427, by the descendants of the men it had been thrown down for, with the difference that the man now collecting was an ordinary Athenian who had drawn a lot.

The consideration, and the default

The framework's most diagnostic question about any settlement is what the grantee owed in return, because a grant that buys armed service leaves a rival with a retinue while a grant that buys compliance leaves a dependant with a title.

The Athenian cleruchy is neither, and the reason is instructive. The cleruch owed no service *to a lord*, because there was no lord; he owed what every Athenian owed, which was liability to be called up. He gave no oath of fealty and received no title deed from a granting authority above him, because the granting authority was the assembly of which he was himself a voting member. He had, in the most exact sense, granted the land to himself.

Which makes the default question — if this arrangement collapsed tomorrow, would this man be better or worse off? — answer itself with unusual force, and answer the same way at nearly every link in the chain. The cleruch on Lesbos loses two hundred drachmas a year and his land the day the fleet stops being able to enforce the decree. The rower loses a drachma a day. The juror, once jury pay exists, loses his three obols. The trierarch loses the standing that comes of being seen to spend on the city, and, more to the point, loses the political order in which spending buys standing rather than confiscation. The metic loses the security and the market that made him settle in Attica in the first place. The Athenian in the city loses the imported grain that the fleet's control of the Hellespont keeps arriving.

Run that chain and the striking thing is not any individual link but the *breadth*. The settlements this corpus has mostly examined bind a coordinating class — a thousand chiefs with eight square miles each, a hundred emirs, a planter gentry — and leave the mass of the population outside, held down rather than bought in. The Athenian settlement bound the demos. By the middle of the fifth century the ordinary Athenian

was not merely governed by the arrangement; he was a shareholder in it, drawing from it in coin, and would have been materially poorer the week after it ended.

No fiction required

One further thing has to be recorded, and it is an absence.

The framework expects a settlement of this kind to be laundered. When a nineteenth-century European power took land it had to convert the taking into an ordinary lawful transaction first, because its own legitimacy at home rested on the proposition that it governed by universal law: hence the declaration that occupied ground was waste, or that a grant was a confirmation of what the grantee already owned, or that a collective holding was partible into individual shares. Hence Crown Lands Ordinances, hence leases of nine hundred and ninety-nine years, hence "the estates of which they are already in possession."

Athens performed none of this. It did not declare Chalcidian land vacant, or Lesbian land partible, or the Aeginetans absent. It announced the seizure as a seizure, hung the prisoners' fetters on the Acropolis where they were still hanging when Herodotus went to look at them two generations later, spent a tenth of the ransom on a bronze chariot, and cut a verse on it saying that the sons of Athens had tamed their enemies and quenched their insolence in chains of iron and darkness. In the Mytilene decree the operative words are the plainest possible: the land was divided, the lots were assigned, the Lesbians paid.

The reason is not that Athens was more honest. It is that the audience whose belief the arrangement depended on did not require the conversion. The men who had to be kept content about the taking of Lesbos were the same men who had rowed to Lesbos, voted the decree, and drawn the lots. Conquest was not, for them, a category standing in tension with the city's founding creed; it was an ordinary honourable activity of a Greek state and a source of legitimate acquisition. So the settlement could be stated in the indicative.

Reading the Athenian settlement against the framework

Three findings, of which the first is the one to carry forward and test, and the other two compound what earlier cases have shown.

The first, and the module's real contribution. Where an order abolishes a dependency internally without redistributing the asset that produced it, the demand does not disappear; it is re-sited outside the boundary of the community that abolished it. Solon removed the render, the markers and the body-as-security, and

explicitly, proudly, left the land in the hands that held it. He therefore produced free men without sufficient land, in a country with no more land, and the requirement he had extinguished as a legal relation persisted as an economic fact needing somewhere to go. It went in two directions. It went into purchased foreigners, on the reading Finley made and the objections have not disposed of. And it went overseas — into four thousand lots on the Chalcidian plain, two thousand at Histiaea, two thousand seven hundred on Lesbos with the previous owners left farming and rendering two minae a year apiece. The sixth-parter was not abolished. He was exported, and the man collecting from him was now the sort of man who used to be him.

This should be offered as a pattern to test rather than a law, and the corpus contains the cases to test it on: Rome after the Licinio-Sextian settlement and the long history of the *ager publicus*; England after villeinage; and, most sharply, the planter republic in Virginia, where a gentry that had abolished its own dependence on a propertyless white poor did so by making most of its poor into slaves and its slaves into a separate race. In each the question is the same and it is answerable from the record: when the internal dependency was ended, where did the demand for dependent labour go, and who was on the far side of the boundary when it got there?

The second. A settlement can be distributed downward, and a downward-distributed settlement is the most stable configuration this corpus has met. The framework's account of the default — that each beneficiary defends the whole by defending his own position, needing no cabal, requiring alignment and not agreement — has so far been demonstrated at the level of a coordinating elite. Athens runs it at the level of a citizen body. Cleruchies, jury pay, the naval wage, the building programme and the imported grain put a material stake in the imperial arrangement into the hands of tens of thousands of ordinary men, which is why the hardest question about Athens — why a poor sovereign majority never expropriated a rich minority — may turn out to have an unglamorous answer: the poor majority was already drawing an income from somewhere else, and the somewhere else was other people's countries. That question belongs to Module 8 and is not settled here; what this module establishes is that the material for the answer exists and can be quantified.

The third. The elaboration of a settlement's legal fiction measures the constraint imposed by the home audience's own creed, and where the home audience requires none, none is manufactured. The corpus has already found that the colonial fiction is aimed not at the governed, who generally described these instruments accurately and sometimes went to war over them, but at the metropole's own voters, taxpayers and soldiers, whose belief that the lawful is legitimate is the cheap foundation the expensive apparatus rests on. Athens is the control case for that finding,

because at Athens the metropole and the soldiery were the same body of men, and their creed held conquest to be honourable. Result: no vacancy, no recognition, no divisibility — a decree in the indicative and a verse on a chariot. **A settlement announces itself as what it is exactly to the degree that the people it must satisfy do not need it to be anything else.**

And the discipline that has to close this. None of the above makes the Athenian settlement a fraud or the Athenians dupes. Solon really did take the Athenian body out of the market, and it stayed out; the man who could not be sold for debt in 420 was not being told a story, he was describing his legal position, and it was a better one than his great-great-grandfather's. Cleisthenes really did make a farmer at Rhamnous the political equal, in the register, of a Eupatrid in the city. These were achievements and they were not achieved anywhere else in the ancient Mediterranean on that scale. The point is only that they were achieved on a particular set of terms — the land untouched, the body of members closed and enumerated, and a growing share of the citizen income drawn from people who had no vote in the assembly that voted it. Both columns stand. Neither cancels the other, and the next ten modules are the work of keeping them both open.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Solon fragment 36 West is quoted in the Greek for the central lines on the boundary markers and the freeing of the black earth, with the remainder of the fragment — the repatriation of those sold abroad and no longer speaking Attic, the freeing of those in bondage at home, the joining of force and justice, the laws written alike for high and low — given in close translation; the fragment survives through quotation in *Athenaion Politeia* 12 and Plutarch, *Solon*. Solon fragment 34 West, on those who came expecting plunder and on his refusal that the base should have an equal share of the rich fatherland with the noble, and fragment 5 West, on giving the demos as much privilege as sufficed while contriving that the powerful should suffer nothing unseemly, are given in translation from the same transmission. *Athenaion Politeia* 2 for the *pelatai* and *hektemoroi* and loans on the body; 6–7 for the *seisachtheia* and the census classes at five hundred, three hundred and two hundred measures, with the *thetes* admitted only to assembly and courts. Herodotus 5.77 for the fetters hung on the Acropolis, the two-minae ransom, the bronze four-horse chariot, the four thousand cleruchs on the land of the Chalcidian *hippobotai*, and the epigram, which is quoted in Macaulay's public-domain rendering and which survives, fragmentarily, in stone. Thucydides 3.50 for the Mytilene settlement: the walls demolished, the ships taken, no

tribute imposed, the land outside Methymna divided into three thousand lots, three hundred reserved as sacred, the rest allotted to Athenians sent out, and the Lesbians farming the land themselves at two minae a year for each lot.

Disputes are given as disputes. The date of Solon's archonship is given as 594/3 with 592/1 noted. The meaning of *hektemoros* — one sixth paid or one sixth retained — is unresolved, as is whether the sixth-parters were debtors at all; Andrewes's argument that the status was ancient rather than crisis-generated is credited, as is Edward Harris's argument that Solon did not abolish debt-bondage in the sense usually asserted, and the older dispute over whether the *horoi* were mortgage stones or boundary stones. The exact figures of the Solonian census classes are flagged as doubted: Ste. Croix held that only the five-hundred-measure qualification is genuinely Solonian and Rhodes doubts exact measures for the lower classes. Herodotus's four thousand cleruchs at Chalcis is noted as possibly inflated. Cleruchy numbers elsewhere rest on single sources and are given as orders of magnitude. The number of Cleisthenic demes is given as roughly a hundred and thirty-nine, the figure the ancient evidence supports, with the epigraphic uncertainty noted in the specialist literature. Finley's formulation — that one aspect of Greek history is the advance, hand in hand, of freedom and slavery — is quoted exactly and briefly and its causal version is given with the objections, since the pre-Solonian attestations of slaves in Draco's homicide law and in Solon's own legislation mean the chronology is not the clean sequence the strong form of the thesis needs.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Finley on slavery and freedom and on the Solonian reform as the inauguration of the Attic slave economy; Andrewes and Ste. Croix on the *hektemoroi* and the *seisachtheia*; Harris on debt-bondage; Rhodes on the census classes and on the *Athenaion Politeia* generally; the recent work on Athenian settlement abroad for the observation that cleruchs of the Lesbian type functioned as absentee rentiers and that the archaeological trace of Athenian overseas settlement is correspondingly thin. Wage comparisons use the drachma a day attested for skilled labour and for naval campaign pay in the later fifth century and are offered as orders of magnitude, not as a cost-of-living calculation. The citizenship law of 451/0, the tribute lists, jury pay, and the internal politics of the empire are named here only so far as the settlement requires and are the business of Modules 6, 8 and 9.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

A COW AND A PANOPLY

Module 3 · The robe — the two garments Athens cut, one for its citizens and one for its subjects; why the second was never meant to persuade; and what it costs to make a man believe that he is the thing itself

The wearer and the bill

Every order that lasts is wrapped in a story about why it is the order of things, and the framework's first question about any such story is not whether it was true but who it was addressed to. In the colonial cases the answer has been consistent and counter-intuitive: the story was cut for the metropole, not for the conquered. The Kikuyu did not need to believe in the civilising mission; the voters in Birmingham did, because it was their taxes, their sons, and their conviction that their country obeyed law that paid for the thing.

Athens looks at first like the case where the question dissolves. The men who made the story and the men who lived under it were the same men, sitting on the same hill. There was no metropole across the water to be reassured, no home electorate to be managed, no distance across which the account could be edited. The Athenian robe was worn by its weavers.

That is half the truth, and the interesting half is the other one. Athens had two robes, not one, and they were different garments made for different bodies. The first was for the Athenian and it was the most magnificent object of its kind in the ancient world. The second was for the two hundred-odd cities that paid for the first, and it was so thin that the Athenians themselves, in public assembly, in front of the allies' own representatives, described the arrangement it covered as a tyranny — and there is no evidence that anybody thought this a slip.

What the Athenian was told he was

The central text is Pericles' oration over the first year's war dead in 431, and before anything is quoted from it a caution has to be entered that governs the whole module: this is Thucydides' composition. He tells us at the start of his history that where he could not recover the exact words he wrote what the occasion required, keeping as close as he could to the general sense of what was actually said. So the oration is not a transcript. What it is — and this is the more useful thing for the framework — is a

fifth-century Athenian's reconstruction of what an Athenian audience would recognise as the correct account of themselves. As evidence of *the robe* rather than of Pericles, that is stronger, not weaker.

The core clause runs:

καὶ ὄνομα μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν δημοκρατία κέκληται· μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἔν τῳ εὐδοκιμεῖ, οὐκ ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πλέον ἐς τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, οὐδ' αὖ κατὰ πενίαν, ἔχων γέ τι ἀγαθὸν δρᾶσαι τὴν πόλιν, ἀξιώματος ἀφανείᾳ κεκώλυται.

In Crawley's public-domain rendering: its administration favours the many instead of the few, which is why it is called a democracy; the laws afford equal justice to all in their private differences; advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition.

That is the whole content of the first robe in one sentence, and every clause of it is a claim about the wearer rather than about the empire. He is one of many rather than one of a few. In a private lawsuit his opponent's birth does not help his opponent. If he is capable he may rise. If he is poor that is not itself a bar. Later in the speech the city is called the school of Hellas, and the claim from the Landscape returns in its proper place: the same people have always held this land and handed it down.

Set beside the settlement examined in the last module and the claims are, remarkably, mostly *accurate*. A poor Athenian really did vote, really did sit on juries deciding cases against rich men, really could not be sold for debt, really was enrolled in a register that made him formally the equal of a Eupatrid. This is not a fiction of the kind that has to be maintained against the evidence. It is a broadly correct description of a genuinely unusual political condition, delivered to men who could check it against their own week.

Which is precisely what made it work, and precisely what makes it a robe rather than a report. The framework's interest is never in whether the story is false. It is in what the story does — and what this one did was give a man an identity so concrete, so verifiable, and so flattering that the question of what was funding it never had to be raised in the same breath.

Who was outside the address

The oration is delivered over the dead, and the dead are named on stone by tribe. That is the boundary, and everything about the robe's address is visible in it.

Metics — resident foreigners, of whom Athens had a great many, who paid a residence tax, served in the army, rowed in the fleet and manufactured much of what the city sold — were not in the register and could not be. Autochthony, the claim that the Athenian had never come from anywhere, is what makes this permanent rather than merely restrictive: a rule about descent from the soil cannot be satisfied by residence, taxation, or service, however long or however faithful. A metic could give a son to the fleet and still not be inside the sentence Pericles was speaking.

Women appear in the oration once, at the end, in a clause telling widows that their greatest glory is to be least spoken of among men, for praise or for blame. Slaves do not appear at all. The men who dug the silver at Laurium, whose product paid for the ships, are not in the speech and were not on the stelai, and their evidence in an Athenian court was receivable only if taken under torture.

None of this is a defect in the robe. It is the robe's function. A garment that fits everybody marks nobody, and what Athens was manufacturing was membership.

What it was made of, and who wove it

The framework asks for the specific institutions carrying the story, their cost, and who paid. At Athens the institutions were festivals, and the striking thing about them is that they were participated in rather than attended.

The Panathenaia, greatest of them, ran annually and in a greater form every fourth year. Its centre was a robe in the literal sense: a *peplos* woven for the goddess by Athenian women and girls, carried up through the city in a procession that ranked the whole community and ended in a great sacrifice on the Acropolis. Then the meat was divided — and a later Athenian law about the lesser Panathenaia shows exactly how, which is worth more than any amount of description. Cows were bought with the revenue of a leased public estate; they were sacrificed on the great altar; the meat was distributed to the Athenian people, and it was apportioned to each deme according to the number of participants each deme had sent to the procession.

Read that as an institution rather than as piety. Membership in the story was quantified, by deme, and paid out in beef. A man who walked in the procession was not being told the story. He was doing it, and eating the proof.

The City Dionysia in the spring was the other great occasion, and by the middle of the fifth century it had accumulated a set of ceremonies before the plays which are among the most revealing objects in this study. Honours voted to citizens and foreigners were proclaimed. The orphans of men killed in the city's wars, raised at public expense, were paraded in the theatre in full armour when they came of age. And

the tribute of the allies was carried into the orchestra and displayed, divided into talents, before a full house.

That last practice is known chiefly from Isocrates, writing in the fourth century to condemn it, and the caution is real: he is hostile, he is late, the practice had ceased, and recent work has shown that the several pre-play ceremonies did not necessarily occur together or continuously. But his account is specific — the surplus divided into talents and brought onto the stage when the theatre was full, and the war orphans led in at the same time, displaying to the allies the value of what had been taken from them and to the rest of the Greeks the number of the fatherless — and it is not contradicted by anything better.

Beyond the great festivals lay the ordinary machinery: an unusually crowded calendar of sacred days, jury pay from the 450s that made a day in court a viable way for a poor man to spend it, and a building programme that Plutarch says put the whole city on wages. There was no clergy in the sense the corpus usually finds — no professional body of interpreters, no catechism, no schools teaching the doctrine. The priesthoods were held by citizens and in some cases, as at Eleusis, by particular families. Nobody was employed to explain Athens to Athenians.

Who paid, and the argument about it

The money came from three places: the silver, the liturgies by which rich men were required to fund a warship or a dramatic chorus at their own expense, and — increasingly and then overwhelmingly — the tribute of the allies.

Plutarch preserves the argument this caused, and although he is writing five hundred years later and Antony Andrewes thought these chapters false to the temper of mid-century Athens, the debate he reports has the shape of a real one. Pericles' opponents, he says, cried out in the assemblies that the people had lost its good name for moving the common treasury from Delos into its own keeping; that Hellas was insulted with a dire insult and manifestly subjected to tyranny when she saw that, with her own enforced contributions for the war, Athens was gilding and bedizening the city — which, for all the world like a wanton woman, adds to her wardrobe precious stones and costly statues and temples worth their millions.

Pericles' answer, as Plutarch gives it, is the sentence the whole module turns on. The Athenians owed the allies no account of their money so long as they carried on the war and kept off the barbarians. *Not a horse do they furnish, not a ship, not a hoplite, but money simply; and this belongs, not to those who give it, but to those who take it, if only they furnish that for which they take it in pay.*

That is not a justification of empire. It is a contractor's defence: we were engaged to provide a service, we are providing it, the fee is ours. There is no appeal to a civilising purpose, no claim that Athenian rule improves the ruled, no doctrine that the tribute is a debt owed to a superior civilisation. The argument is that the money changed ownership at the point of payment.

And out of it came the Acropolis. The Parthenon's building accounts survive in part on stone, in enough fragments to show that the state kept and published them and not enough to recover a reliable total, and the figures that circulate should be treated with suspicion. What is not in doubt is the scale, or that the surviving accounts show public money and imported marble and paid labour.

One further thing about that building deserves a place here, because it is the point where the robe becomes literally visible and where honesty requires an admission of ignorance. The Parthenon carried a continuous sculpted frieze, and the standard interpretation since the eighteenth century has been that it shows the Panathenaic procession — which would make it the only Greek temple of its kind to depict, in that position, not gods or heroes but the living citizens of the city that built it. Joan Connelly has argued at length that this is wrong: that the frieze, like the metopes and pediments above it, shows myth, and specifically the family of King Erechtheus preparing the sacrifice of his youngest daughter, demanded by an oracle to save Athens from Eumolpus of Eleusis. Her case rests partly on elements of the historical procession that are missing from the frieze and elements on the frieze not attested in the procession, and partly on fragments of a lost Euripides play recovered from mummy wrappings. The argument is contested and unresolved.

It is worth stating that it is unresolved rather than choosing, because the two readings are the two halves of the robe and the dispute is a reminder of how little can be recovered. On one reading the most expensive object in the Greek world showed the Athenians themselves, walking. On the other it showed a king dressing his child for the knife because the city required it. Either would be a statement about membership. Nobody now knows which one the men who paid for it were looking at.

The second robe

Now the other garment, which is where the framework's colonial prediction is tested.

Athens did not leave its subjects outside the festivals. It compelled them in, by decree. The colony at Brea, founded around the 440s, was instructed in its foundation decree to bring a cow and a panoply to the Great Panathenaia and a phallos to the Dionysia. Erythrae was required to send grain for the Panathenaia. And in 425/4, in

the great tribute reassessment moved by Thoudippos, the requirement was extended to the whole empire: the cities assessed for tribute *shall all bring a cow and panoply to the Great Panathenaia, and they shall take part in the procession in the same manner as colonists.*

That last clause is the most exact sentence in this module. The subject cities are to walk in the Athenian goddess's procession, carrying a beast for her altar and a suit of armour for her treasury, *καθάπερ ἄποικοι* — in the same manner as colonists. Their place in the story is legislated, itemised, and named. The Cleinias decree, which tightened tribute collection, extended the same enforcement machinery to the cow and the panoply as to the money: a legal process for non-delivery of the offering.

The same instrument reached into Eleusis. A decree of the later fifth century required the allies to send first-fruits of barley and wheat to the Two Goddesses on the same basis as the Athenian demes, and invited the rest of the Greeks to do likewise. Athens was extending the oldest and most prestigious cult in Attica outward across the Aegean, and the modern commentary is right that this can be read either as an imposition or as a mark of religious community. It was both, and the point is that it was decided at Athens.

Compare this with the colonial pattern and the difference is instructive. A European power in Africa or Asia typically withheld its own formation from the subject majority, because forming them fully would have meant admitting them. Athens did the opposite: it required the subjects to perform the Athenian story, in the Athenian city, on a schedule, at their own expense. But it required only the *performance*. Nothing in the decree offers the Mytilenean or the Samian membership. He brings the cow, walks in the procession as a colonist walks, and goes home to a city whose walls Athens has pulled down and whose land Athens may have divided into lots.

And it did not work. The subject cities revolted repeatedly across seventy years — Naxos, Thasos, Euboea, Samos, Mytilene, and at the end, after the Sicilian catastrophe, in a cascade. When Athens finally fell in 404, the news was received in the Aegean as a liberation. Whatever the cow and the panoply were doing, they were not producing belief.

The thing they said out loud

Which brings us to the fact that most distinguishes Athens from every colonial case in this corpus, and that ought to be startling.

In 430, defending his war policy to an assembly ravaged by plague and furious with him, Thucydides has Pericles say: *ὡς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον* — for you hold it now like a tyranny, which it seems

unjust to have taken but is dangerous to let go. Three years later Cleon, arguing for the massacre of the Mytileneans, opens by telling the assembly that their empire is a tyranny and their subjects are unwilling men who obey because they are compelled. And in 416 the Athenian envoys at Melos, in the dialogue Thucydides constructs, dispense with the vocabulary of justice at the outset and put the matter as a proposition about the world: those in a position of strength do what their power permits, and the weak concede.

The transmission caveat applies again and again cuts the useful way. Thucydides wrote these speeches. What they demonstrate is not that Pericles used those words but that a fifth-century Athenian, writing for fifth-century Athenians, judged it plausible that a leader would stand on the Pnyx and tell the citizens their empire was a tyranny — and would say it not as a confession but as a *reason to hold on*. The argument is: it is a tyranny, taking it may have been unjust, letting it go would be fatal. That is an argument which assumes the audience will not be scandalised.

Now set that against the colonial cases. No British minister could rise in the Commons and say that Kenya was a land grab which it might have been wrong to make but would be dangerous to relinquish. He could think it; some of them did; but he could not say it in that room, because the belief on which the whole apparatus rested was the belief of the men in that room that their country acted lawfully. The moment the taking is named as a taking, the funding, the manpower and the moral licence begin to go. That is why the Crown Lands Ordinances exist, why the vacancy and recognition fictions exist, why the despatches were written in one language and the operations conducted in another.

At Athens there was nothing to protect. The men who had to be kept content about the tribute were the men who had rowed for it, voted for it, and drew their three obols and their portion of sacrificial beef out of it. Their creed did not contain a proposition that conquest was wrong. So the arrangement could be named accurately, in the assembly, in front of everyone.

Reading the Athenian robe against the framework

Three findings. The first is the module's contribution and should be tested against the rest of the corpus; the second follows from it; the third is a correction to how the framework has been costing these things.

One. The robe's load-bearing content is not a justification of the extraction. It is a constitution of the beneficiary. Almost nothing in the Athenian story addressed to Athenians argued that ruling the Aegean was right. The funeral oration mentions the empire as a possession and an achievement — the greatest power ever assembled, a

city that is the school of Hellas — and never as a justice. What it argues, clause by clause, is *what an Athenian is*: one of many not few, equal before the law, advanced by merit, unhindered by poverty, sprung from a soil his people never came to. And a man who has been given an identity that specific, that flattering, and that largely accurate does not require the tribute to be justified, because the question he brings to the assembly is not *is this right* but *is this ours and can we hold it*.

This should be turned back on the earlier cases as a test, and the test is answerable from their own records. Take the *mission civilisatrice*, the White Man's Burden, the Roman formula about sparing the conquered and warring down the proud, and ask which part was actually carrying the weight at home: the proposition that the conquest benefited the conquered, or the proposition that the metropolitan citizen was the kind of man who does such things? The prediction this module makes is that the first was always brittle — it could be embarrassed by evidence, and repeatedly was — while the second was not, because there is no fact about a colonial war that can refute a Frenchman's sense of what France is. **A robe woven out of the wearer's identity cannot be falsified by news from the colony. A robe woven out of a claim about outcomes can be, and eventually is.**

Two, following from it. The candour an imperial order permits itself in its own councils measures how little of its legitimacy is borrowed from a creed it might be caught violating. Athens could call its empire a tyranny in public because no load-bearing belief was pledged against that description. Britain could not, because the whole structure at home rested on the proposition that the British state acted within law, and a public admission would have called in that pledge. This gives the corpus a diagnostic that runs the other way from the usual one: **the more elaborate an empire's legal fictions, the more of its own creed it has put at risk; and the more bluntly it can describe itself, the less it has borrowed.** It also predicts where such an order breaks, which is not at Athens's kind of frankness but at Britain's kind of exposure — a point for Module 10.

Three, a correction. The framework says the robe converts an expensive order into a cheap one. Athens shows a third possibility: the robe stays expensive, and the bill is sent abroad. The Athenian story was not cheap to maintain. It required the greatest building programme in the Greek world, a calendar of festivals that consumed a substantial part of the year, hecatombs of cattle, jury pay, choral productions, and a public grant to the orphans of the dead. What made it *feel* costless to the Athenian was that the largest single revenue funding it came from cities which had no vote in the assembly that spent it. So the correct formulation is not that the Athenian robe was cheap. It is that its price was charged to a population outside the register — and that

this is a option available only to an order which has subjects who are not members. It is, in that sense, the exact inverse of the colonial case, where the metropole taxes itself to fund an order the colony will not believe in. Athens taxed the colony to fund an order the metropole believed in completely.

And the discipline that must close this, because the module has been unsparing and the unsparingness is not the point. The funeral oration is not a lie and the Athenian who heard it was not a dupe. He really could sit in judgement on a rich man; his body really could not be pledged for a loan; his name really was in a book that made him, in the matters that book governed, the equal of anyone. Nothing in this corpus had produced that before and very little would produce it again for two thousand years. The finding is not that the robe was false. The finding is that it was addressed to him alone, that it told him who he was rather than what his city was doing, and that the cattle at the great altar were bought partly with money brought in by men who had walked in the same procession under compulsion, carrying a cow and a suit of armour, in the same manner as colonists.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Thucydides 2.37.1 is quoted in the Greek and in Crawley's public-domain translation; 2.41 for the city as the school of Hellas and 2.45 for the clause addressed to widows are given in close paraphrase; 2.63.2 is quoted in the Greek (*ὡς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον*) with translation; Cleon's echo at 3.37.2 and the Athenian position at Melos in 5.89 are paraphrased with citation. Thucydides' own statement of method at 1.22.1 — that where the exact words could not be recovered he wrote what the occasion required — is applied throughout and should govern any use of these speeches: they are evidence of what a fifth-century Athenian audience would find a plausible thing to hear said, not transcripts.

For the inscriptions, the texts and translations at Attic Inscriptions Online were used and are credited: IG I^3 71, decree 2 (Thoudippos, 425/4), for the requirement that all tribute-assessed cities bring a cow and panoply to the Great Panathenaia and take part in the procession in the same manner as colonists; IG I^3 46 for the same obligation laid on the colony at Brea, with a phallos for the Dionysia; IG I^3 34 (the Kleinias decree) for the extension of the tribute-enforcement process to the cow and panoply; the Erythrai regulations for grain sent to the Panathenaia; the Eleusinian first-fruits decree for the requirement that allies contribute on the same basis as the Athenian demes with an invitation to the other Greeks; and the later law and decree concerning the Little

Panathenaia for the mechanism by which sacrificial meat was apportioned to each deme according to the number it sent in procession. Where these texts are fragmentary and restored, that is the normal condition of the epigraphic record and the restorations are those of the standard editions.

Plutarch, *Pericles* 12.2–3, is quoted in Perrin's and Dryden's public-domain renderings for the critics' charge that Hellas was insulted and tyrannised while Athens gilded herself like a wanton woman with contributions enforced for the war, and for Pericles' reply that the allies furnish not a horse, not a ship, not a hoplite, but money simply, which belongs to those who take it if they furnish what they are paid for. Plutarch writes some five centuries after the events and Andrewes argued that these chapters misrepresent mid-fifth-century Athenian feeling; that objection is recorded in the text. Isocrates, *On the Peace* 82, is the source for the tribute displayed talent by talent in the orchestra when the theatre was full and for the war orphans led in; he is a hostile fourth-century witness writing after the practice had ended, and recent work (Giannotti and others) has shown that the several pre-play ceremonies were not necessarily simultaneous or continuous, the tribute display being confined to the imperial period. Both cautions are stated in the text rather than in a footnote.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Connelly's mythological reading of the Parthenon frieze as the sacrifice of Erechtheus's daughter, given as contested and unresolved against the standard identification with the Panathenaic procession; Andrewes on Plutarch's Periclean chapters; the epigraphic commentary at Attic Inscriptions Online on the allies' festival obligations and on the ambiguity between imposition and religious community. No total cost is given for the Parthenon: the building accounts survive only in fragments and the round figures in circulation are not securely derivable from them. Metic numbers, slave numbers, the tribute totals, and the internal politics of the allied cities are named here only as the robe requires and belong to Modules 6, 8 and 11.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

FOR ONE NIGHT AND ONE DAY

Module 4 · Formation — a city with no schools that produced the most politically competent population in the ancient world, the machine that did it, the ceiling it could not remove, and the men who taught it without being allowed to vote in it

A question asked of a city with no schools

The framework's fourth question is who was taught what, by whom, and to what ceiling — and it expects, in the colonial cases, an answer shaped by a single constraint: forming the subject population fully would mean admitting it, so formation is rationed, and what gets built is a thin apparatus producing clerks and catechists rather than believers.

Asked of Athens the question first appears to be a mistake, because eighty miles away lay the state that gives the ancient world its model answer. Sparta took its boys at seven, removed them from their households, and put them through a graded, compulsory, publicly directed regime for twenty-three years, at the end of which it had a Spartiate. That is a formation apparatus: a staff, a curriculum, a sequence, an inspectorate, and a doctrine.

Athens had nothing of the kind. There was no public school system, no state curriculum, no examination, no ministry, no compulsory anything. Education was a private purchase made by a father from a tradesman, and the state's entire legislative interest in the schoolroom, so far as the surviving laws go, was in keeping grown men out of it.

And yet the Athenian citizen was, in the specific sense this study cares about, one of the most thoroughly formed people in the ancient record. He could follow a financial argument in an assembly of thousands, sit in judgement on a general's accounts, draft and amend a decree, and hold a lifelong understanding of his own position in the order that required no priest to explain it to him. Something formed him. It was not a school.

What a father could buy

Take the private machinery first, because its limits are the point.

A boy of a family that could pay went at about seven to three sorts of teacher, each charging fees: the *grammatistes* for letters and the poets, the *kitharistes* for the lyre and singing, and the *paidotribes* for the wrestling-ground. What he learned was Homer,

largely by heart, some writing and reckoning, music, and physical competence. Basic schooling ended somewhere around fourteen to sixteen. Beyond that lay rhetoric, and rhetoric lay with the sophists, whose fees were on a different scale entirely.

The state regulated none of the content and paid none of the cost, but it did legislate about the premises, and the law Aeschines had read out in court in 346 is worth having in its own words:

The teachers of the boys shall open the school-rooms not earlier than sunrise, and they shall close them before sunset. No person who is older than the boys shall be permitted to enter the room while they are there, unless he be a son of the teacher, a brother, or a daughter's husband. If any one enter in violation of this prohibition, he shall be punished with death.

Aeschines' own gloss is exact: the lawgiver distrusts the teachers, and prescribes when the free-born boy goes to the schoolroom, how many others may go with him, and when he goes home, because he is exceedingly suspicious of a man being alone with a boy or in the dark with him. The Athenian state's whole recorded interest in schooling was in preventing the sexual exploitation of citizen sons. It had no view at all on what those sons were told.

One further detail belongs here because of what it shows about the shape of the whole arrangement. The boy did not walk to school alone, and he did not carry his own tablet or lyre. He was accompanied by a *paidagogos* — a household slave, usually older, whose job was not to teach but to escort, to supervise the boy's manners in the street, to carry his things, and to beat him when required. The word that survives in every European language for a theory of education originally meant the slave who walked the child there.

The machine that actually did it

The formation of the Athenian happened after he was thirty, and it happened by employment.

Start with the Council of Five Hundred. Fifty men from each of the ten tribes, chosen by lot from those over thirty who put themselves forward, serving one year, meeting on something like two hundred and seventy-five days of it, and paid. And then the constraint that makes the whole thing a formation machine rather than merely a government: **no man could serve on the Council more than twice in his life**, and not in consecutive years.

Consider what that rule does. It converts a governing body into a rota. Five hundred places a year, with a hard lifetime cap, in a citizen body most plausibly reckoned in the tens of thousands, means the Council could not become a class. It had to be

continually restocked from men who had never done it, which is another way of saying that its principal output, over decades, was not decisions but experienced citizens.

Inside the Council the machinery went further. The fifty men of one tribe served as *prytaneis* — the standing executive — for a tenth of the year, living and dining at public expense in the round house beside the council chamber, on duty every day, receiving envoys and dispatches, convening the Council and the Assembly. And each day at sunset a lot was drawn among those fifty for the *epistates ton prytaneon*, the chairman, who held the office for one night and one day. During those twenty-four hours he held the public seal of Athens and the keys of the sanctuaries where the treasuries and the archives were kept, and in the fifth century he presided over any meeting of the Council or the Assembly falling on his day.

And no man could hold it twice.

Run the arithmetic that the standard reference works run. Three hundred and sixty-five chairmen a year, each different, each holding the seal and the keys of the state. Assume an Athenian who reaches thirty has perhaps thirty years of eligibility ahead of him. Over that span the office must be filled by something like ten thousand different men — and the conclusion drawn in the handbooks is that a considerable proportion of Athenian citizens, perhaps half, held it at some point in their lives.

Half. For one night and one day, by lot, once, an ordinary Athenian farmer or potter or rower was the nearest thing his city had to a head of state, sleeping in the round house with the seal beside him.

Around this sat the rest of the apparatus, and the same logic governs all of it. Something on the order of several hundred magistracies were filled annually, the great majority by lot, almost all annual, most non-repeatable. Every one of those men underwent *dokimasia*, a scrutiny before taking office, and *euthyna*, an audit of his conduct and accounts after leaving it — which means that in the ordinary course of a life an Athenian both submitted to examination and sat in judgement on other men's. Six thousand jurors were empanelled each year for the courts, drawn by lot from volunteers over thirty, paid two obols and later three, hearing cases in panels of hundreds. There was no bench of professional judges, no public prosecutor, and no appeal.

Add it up as a life rather than as a constitution. An Athenian who lived to sixty had very probably judged cases, quite probably served on the Council, possibly held a magistracy, and stood a coin-flip's chance of having held the seal of the state for a day. He had voted on wars. He had audited the men who fought them.

What employment teaches that instruction cannot

Nobody had to tell such a man that the order was his. He had the memory.

This is the module's central observation and it is worth stating plainly before the qualifications begin. There are two ways to produce the belief that makes an order cheap to hold. One is to teach it: build a staff, a doctrine, a curriculum, a place of instruction, and persuade. The other is to hand out the work: put the man inside the institution and let the experience do what no sermon can. The first is expensive, requires continuous maintenance, and can fail, because a proposition that has been argued into someone can be argued out again. The second costs the price of a rota and cannot really be undone, because what it produces is not an opinion but a recollection.

The Athenian evidence for the second is not confined to office. The festivals worked the same way. Each year the ten tribes competed at the Dionysia with dithyrambic choruses of fifty men and fifty boys apiece — a thousand Athenians singing in one competition, before the dramatic choruses are counted, all of it financed by wealthy citizens under compulsion of liturgy. The sacrificial meat at the Panathenaia was apportioned to demes by the number each sent in the procession. A man did not attend the civic religion of Athens; he was in it, and was fed according to whether he had turned up.

The framework's account of why the Athenian floor was so thin — no garrison, no political police, three hundred foreign slaves with staves — can now be completed. There was nothing to garrison against, because the persuasive work had already been done by the ordinary operation of the institutions, and it had been done to almost everybody.

The ceiling, and where it moved to

Now the ceiling, because there was one, and it is exactly where a reader of this corpus should expect to find it.

Two things at Athens could not be distributed by lot. The first was the generalship. The ten *strategoi* were elected, not allotted, and — uniquely among Athenian offices — could be re-elected indefinitely. Pericles held the office in an unbroken series of years. A city willing to entrust the state seal to a random farmer for a day was not willing to entrust a fleet to one, and the exception is honest rather than hypocritical: competence in war is not distributed by lot and the Athenians knew it. But the consequence is that the one continuously held office in the constitution was the one filled by election, and election rewards reputation, connection, and the ability to be known.

The second was the ability to move six thousand men on the Pnyx. Any citizen could speak; the herald's question was addressed to whoever wished. But speaking well before that crowd was a skill, and by the second half of the fifth century it was a skill for sale. The sophists who taught it — Protagoras of Abdera, Gorgias of Leontini, and the rest — charged fees that put them beyond the reach of the men whose votes they were teaching their pupils to win.

So the aristocratic advantage that Cleisthenes' register and the lot had removed from the offices did not disappear. It relocated. It moved out of the constitution, where it had been visible and could be legislated against, and into a purchased skill, where the law could not see it at all. A poor Athenian in 420 had a formal position his great-grandfather could not have imagined and faced, in practice, a political class of well-born, well-taught, well-connected men who spoke better than he did — Pericles, Nicias, Alcibiades — with the notable and much-resented exception of men like Cleon, who came from trade and spoke like it.

The bitterest contemporary witness saw all of this and understood it perfectly, which is why he is useful. The anonymous pamphlet that goes under the name of the Old Oligarch begins by announcing that he disapproves of the Athenian constitution because it has chosen to let the worst people be better off than the good, and then sets out, with something close to admiration, exactly how well it is designed. On the question of who speaks he is precise: it is excellent policy to let even the worst speak, because if the good men made the policy it would be splendid for men like themselves and not for the people; as it is, any wretch who wishes can stand up and get what is good for himself and his sort. And they know, he says, that this man's ignorance and baseness and goodwill are more profitable to them than the good man's virtue and wisdom and ill will.

Then the sentence that closes the argument:

For the people do not want a good government under which they themselves are slaves; they want to be free and to rule. Bad government is of little concern to them.

Read as evidence about formation, that is remarkable testimony from a hostile source: the demos was not confused about its position, had not been fooled, and was making a considered trade. Whether the Old Oligarch is a sincere oligarch or an exercise in argument is disputed and does not much matter here. What matters is that a fifth-century enemy of the democracy could not find, as his complaint, that the people had been deceived. His complaint was that they knew what they were doing.

And a few lines earlier he says something that this study will have to return to at length. The poor and the common people, he writes, are right to have more than the well-born and wealthy, for the reason that it is the people who man the ships and give

the city its power: the steersmen, the boatswains, the sub-boatswains, the look-out men and the shipwrights — these give the city its strength far more than the hoplites and the well-born and the good men do. That is the governing hypothesis of this entire study, written down in the fifth century by a man who hated the arrangement it describes. It is taken up properly in Module 9.

Who was outside

The formation was total for those inside the address and absolute in its exclusions, and one of the exclusions is the sharpest fact in the module.

Women received no civic formation of any kind, since there was no civic role to form them for; some were literate, girls of good families learned music and weaving and the management of a household, and the *arrhephoroi* who helped weave the goddess's robe were girls. Slaves received nothing except, in the case of the *paidagogos*, an education good enough to superintend a citizen's son. And metics — resident foreigners, permanently barred by the autochthony rule from any register — were excluded from every office, every jury, every vote, and the Council.

Which produces the following situation. Anaxagoras, who taught Pericles, was from Clazomenae. Protagoras and Gorgias, who taught rhetoric to the sons of the Athenian rich, were from Abdera and Leontini. Lysias, the finest writer of court speeches in Athens and the son of a man Pericles had personally invited to settle there, was a metic, and when the oligarchy of 404 wanted money it killed his brother and seized the family's shield factory, and Lysias's greatest speech was one he could not deliver as a citizen. Aristotle, who ran the Lyceum and wrote the constitutional history this study has quoted in every module, was a metic from Stagira who could not own the ground his school stood on and who left Athens in the end because his position there was never secure.

A great deal of the intellectual formation of classical Athens was performed by people who were not permitted to vote on anything, in a city whose founding claim about itself was that its citizens had never come from anywhere. The teachers were immigrants. The escort was a slave. The formation belonged to the boy alone.

The apparatus built at the end

One last fact, and it is the one that most needs its uncertainty stated.

Athens did eventually build a genuine state formation apparatus: the *ephebeia*, a compulsory two-year programme for citizens of eighteen and nineteen, state-funded, under elected supervisors, with physical and military training, garrison duty in the

border forts, a sword and shield issued from the treasury, and an oath sworn in a temple to defend the city and never desert the ranks. It is the closest thing Athens ever had to the Spartan machine.

Its date is disputed and the dispute matters. The earliest ephebic inscriptions are of 334/3, and the law establishing it is attributed to Epicrates and placed in 335 or early 334, in the wake of Alexander's destruction of Thebes. Whether anything institutional preceded it is genuinely contested: some scholars find fifth-century traces, others argue the term *ephebos* before the 330s means simply a young man who has reached legal maturity and implies no institution at all, and the recent specialist work leans toward a creation *de novo*. The ephebic oath itself may well be much older than any training system attached to it.

If the majority current view is right, the sequence is worth sitting with. Athens went roughly two centuries without a state formation apparatus while its institutions were doing the work, and then built one in the 330s — after Chaeronea, after the empire, after the fleet had ceased to be the decisive instrument of the Aegean, in a city whose freedom of action was gone. And one of the reasons offered for it in the modern literature is that this particular age group could not obtain the educational benefits of the democratic institutions, because they were too young to hold office in them.

The state supplied a curriculum precisely where the rota could not reach.

Reading Athenian formation against the framework

Three findings. The first is the module's contribution and it should change how the corpus's earlier Module 4s are read.

One. Formation of the kind that makes an order cheap to hold is not a curriculum. It is a share of the work — and that is why it cannot be given partially. The framework has held that colonial powers withheld formation from the majority because forming them would mean admitting them. Athens shows why the withholding was so total and so consistent across otherwise very different empires: the effective formative instrument is not instruction but *office*. What formed the Athenian was chairing a meeting, auditing a magistrate, sitting on a jury, voting a war, and holding the keys of the treasury for a night. There is no way to give a subject population that experience without giving it the thing itself, because the experience *is* the thing itself.

The consequence, which this corpus has repeatedly observed without quite explaining, follows immediately. A colonial power can build schools — and several in this corpus built a great many — and still form nobody, because school is not the mechanism. What such schools reliably produce is men who can read the metropole's

own creed, compare it against their treatment, and find the discrepancy. Clerks first and nationalists afterwards. The pattern is not a failure of colonial education. It is what education produces when it is unaccompanied by the only thing that actually forms a political subject, which is a share in the work, and which cannot be granted without ending the arrangement. **Instruction without office does not produce belief; it produces a literate population with a grievance and the vocabulary to state it.**

Two. Where the formal routes to advantage are closed off, the advantage reforms around whatever the closure cannot reach. Athens allotted its offices, capped tenure, audited every official, and paid the poor to serve. It could not allot the ability to persuade six thousand men, and it would not allot the command of a fleet. So the advantage went there: into elected, indefinitely renewable generalships, and into a purchased skill invisible to the constitution. This is the same shape as the finding from Module 2 — a dependency abolished at home reappearing abroad — and the two together suggest a general form worth testing across the corpus: **abolishing the mechanism of an advantage without abolishing its underlying asset relocates the advantage rather than removing it, and it relocates to wherever the abolishing instrument does not reach.** In Attica the asset was wealth, the abolished mechanism was the property qualification for office, and the place the instrument could not reach was speech.

Three, offered as a proposition to test rather than a finding, because it rests on one case and has an obvious counter-example. The construction of a deliberate formation apparatus may be a symptom rather than a cause — a mark of the moment when the institutions stopped forming people by themselves. Athens built no such apparatus while the assembly, the courts and the Council were consuming and returning its citizens by the thousand, and built one when that machinery had ceased to govern anything that mattered.

The counter-example is Sparta, eighty miles away, which built the most elaborate formation apparatus in the Greek world and maintained it at the height of its power, not in its decline. That difference is the interesting part, and it suggests the discrimination the proposition actually needs. The Spartiate's share of the work was garrison duty over a subject population many times his number — which is employment, and formative, but not self-justifying, because nothing in the daily experience of holding down helots explains why it should be so. That kind of work requires doctrine to be bearable, and doctrine requires an apparatus. The Athenian's share of the work carried its own justification in the doing: a man who has held the seal does not need to be told why he should hold it. **So the refined proposition is that an order needs a formation apparatus in proportion to the gap between what its**

members do and what they must believe about what they do — and that the deliberate apparatus appears when the work stops speaking for itself. That is testable, in this corpus, on the mission school and the Roman imperial cult, and it is where Module 10 will have to look.

And the discipline. Nothing here is a debunking of what Athens made. The rota was real: half of them held the seal, and the arithmetic is not rhetoric. Ordinary men in that city acquired a political competence that has almost no parallel before the modern age, and they acquired it without being preached at, examined, or supervised by anyone. It is worth saying plainly that this was an achievement.

It is also worth saying that the boy who grew into it walked to school beside a man who owned nothing, carrying nothing himself because it was not fitting; that the rhetoric which decided the assembly was taught by foreigners for fees; and that the philosopher who wrote down how the Athenian constitution worked was not permitted to own the house he wrote it in. The formation was total, and it stopped exactly at the edge of the register, which is where every line in this study has stopped so far.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* 9–12, is quoted in C. D. Adams's public-domain translation for the law on schoolrooms opening not before sunrise and closing before sunset, the exclusion of adult men, the death penalty for violation, and the regulation of gymnasiarchs, with Aeschines' own gloss that the lawgiver distrusts the teachers. The Old Oligarch (Pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians*) is quoted in Marchant's public-domain Loeb rendering: 1.1 on the choice to let the worst be better off than the good; 1.6–8 on allowing any wretch to speak and on the demos preferring ignorance with goodwill to virtue with ill will, ending with the clause that the people do not want a good government under which they are themselves slaves but want to be free and to rule; and 1.2 on the steersmen, boatswains, look-outs and shipwrights giving the city its strength more than the hoplites and the well-born. Whether the author is a sincere oligarch or is conducting an exercise is disputed in the scholarship and is noted as such. *Athenaion Politeia* 44.1–2 underlies the account of the *epistates ton prytaneon* — chosen by lot each day, in office for one night and one day, holding the public seal and the keys of the treasuries and archives, and ineligible to hold the office twice — corroborated by the Suda's entry, which reproduces the same provisions. *Athenaion Politeia* 42 underlies the fourth-century ephebic arrangements. Thucydides 2.37 and 2.40 are referred to but were quoted in Module 3.

Quantities are given with their basis. The Council's composition, its annual term, and the two-terms-in-a-lifetime limit are securely attested. The estimate that roughly half of Athenian citizens held the day-chairmanship at some point in their lives is a calculation, not a datum: it follows from 365 non-repeatable chairmen a year over an assumed thirty years of eligibility, set against citizen-body estimates in the tens of thousands, and it is the figure given in the standard reference literature, which itself flags the assumptions. Citizen-body totals in the range of 30,000 to 60,000 depending on period are given as a range because the underlying evidence is indirect and the specialist estimates, Hansen's in particular, are themselves contested. Jury numbers (six thousand empanelled) and jury pay (two obols, raised to three) are as the sources give them. The number of annual magistracies is given only as an order of magnitude.

Disputes are flagged rather than resolved. The date and prior existence of the *ephebeia* is genuinely open: the earliest ephebic inscriptions are of 334/3 and the law of Epicrates is placed in 335/4, but whether an institution preceded it is contested, with Friend and Henderson arguing for creation *de novo* and others finding fifth-century traces; the ephebic oath may be considerably older than any training institution attached to it, as the specialist literature on the oath argues separately. The reading offered here — that the apparatus appears at the point when the institutions had ceased to form — depends on the later dating and is stated as conditional on it.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Hansen on the demography and institutional statistics of the Athenian democracy; Friend and Henderson on the ephebeia's origin, together with the observation in that literature that the ephebeia served an age group unable to obtain formation from the democratic institutions themselves; the standard handbook treatments of the prytany and the day-chairmanship; the general accounts of private schooling, the three sorts of teacher, and the *paidagogos*. The biographical facts about Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Gorgias, Lysias and Aristotle as non-citizens at Athens are standard and are used only for their civic status, not for the details of their careers. The metic condition, the citizenship law of 451/0, and the political consequences of the elected generalship are named here only as formation requires and belong to Modules 8 and 9.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

AND FILLED ALL VACANCIES AS THEY OCCURRED

Module 5 · The cost column — why five different kinds of person inside one order complied with it; what each of them got and what each of them stood to lose; and the single variable that turns out to set the whole ledger

The question, asked five times

Why does an ordinary person go along with an arrangement he did not design?

The framework's answer is a ledger with three columns and it is worth setting them out before any Athenian appears. There is what refusal costs — the penalty, and the credibility of its being applied. There is what compliance pays — and this column is often left empty by accounts that assume ordinary people are simply held down, when frequently they are also being paid. And there is belief: the conviction that the arrangement is right, or at least that it is simply how things are, which does the same work as the other two columns and costs almost nothing to maintain once it has taken.

To these three a fourth has to be added, and this module exists largely to argue that it governs the other three. **Can the person leave?** Not in the abstract, but concretely: is there somewhere to go, can he get there, and is what waits for him there better than what he has? An order that its people can walk out of must make compliance worth choosing. An order they cannot walk out of need only make refusal not worth trying.

Athens will not yield one answer to any of this, because Athens was not one population. Inside the same order, in the same decade, under decrees passed by the same assembly, there lived at least five kinds of person whose ledgers differ not in degree but in kind. This module runs them one at a time.

The Athenian thete

Begin with the poorest citizen, since he is the man the whole study is about.

His benefit column is unusually full. On campaign he drew a drachma a day, three obols in leaner times, from a fleet that needed him by the thousand every spring. If he sat on a jury he drew two obols, later three, on days when the courts sat, which was often. He walked in the Panathenaic procession and his deme received sacrificial meat

apportioned by how many men it had sent. He worked on the building programme for wages. If a cleruchy was voted he might draw a lot on Lesbos or Euboea, and if it was the Lesbian kind he might draw two hundred drachmas a year for the rest of his life without leaving Attica. In the fourth century he would draw from the theoric fund.

And the parts of his benefit column that were not money were not therefore soft. He could not be pledged as security for a loan; his body could not be touched to produce evidence in a court; he could bring an action against a man of any wealth and be judged by several hundred of his neighbours; and he stood, by the arithmetic of Module 4, something near an even chance of holding the state seal for a night before he died. It is worth being precise about what this meant to a poor man in the fifth-century Mediterranean, which is that his position was better than that of almost anyone alive in the same latitude.

His cost column is correspondingly thin, and its principal instrument is worth studying closely because it is one of the cleverest devices in the corpus. It was called *atimia* — to be *atimos*, without honour, without value. Aeschines, reading the law to a jury in 346, enumerated it: the *atimos* might hold no office, civil or priestly, either in Athens or in any town within the dominion of Athens; he could not serve as herald or ambassador; he could not give his opinion or speak in the assembly or the council; he was not permitted even to appear within the extent of the agora; he was excluded from the public sanctuaries and from any share in public sacrifice; he could neither bring an action nor appear as a witness in any court — and, the enumeration ends, nor could anyone bring an action against him.

Read the last clause twice. He cannot sue and cannot be sued. He has not been imprisoned or exiled or maimed. He has been made invisible in both directions, still living among his neighbours, walking around the edge of the marketplace he may not enter, present at no sacrifice. Failing to observe the restrictions could bring death.

Now notice three things about this penalty as an instrument. It costs the state nothing to inflict: no prison, no warders, no executioner, no garrison. It requires no force at all, because the enforcement is performed by everybody — the man at the agora's edge is kept out by the ordinary recognition of several thousand neighbours who know his face. And it works *only on a man who has something to lose*. It is a penalty made entirely out of withdrawn benefit, which means an order can use it only after it has given.

Atimia was also imposed automatically on anyone who owed a debt to the state and had not paid it in time; court fines had no upper limit and could exceed a man's whole estate; and the debt, with the status, was inheritable. So the instrument reached down into families.

Around it sat a dense mesh of social pressure that no law describes. The deme was a face-to-face community that registered a man, buried him, and knew his business; the courts were arenas where reputation was tried alongside the charge, and the surviving speeches are full of a man's whole life being read out; comedy named living citizens by name in front of thousands; ostracism removed a man for ten years on the votes of a crowd that needed to give no reason. For the rich there was *antidosis*, a mechanism of some genius: a man appointed to fund a warship or a chorus who claimed a richer man should bear it had to offer that man an exchange of entire estates, so a plea of poverty could be tested by taking it literally. Nobody had to enforce generosity. The instrument enforced itself.

His exit was, physically, the easiest in the whole study. He lived on a coast, in a world of several hundred Greek-speaking cities, and he could be on a ship in an afternoon. And it was ruinous, because everywhere he went he would arrive as a foreigner, and what a foreigner was in a Greek city is set out in the third ledger below. He would exchange a vote, a jury seat, a claim on the tribute, and an inviolable body for a residence tax and a sponsor. Exit for an Athenian citizen was available and worthless — which is another way of saying that the arrangement had made itself the best offer on the water.

The Athenian farmer

The second ledger is the same man's better-off neighbour, and it exists to make one point: this arrangement also imposed severe costs on its own members, and they bore them.

Pericles' war strategy required the entire rural population of Attica to abandon its farms, move inside the walls, and watch from them while a Peloponnesian army cut down its olives and vines. Thucydides describes how bitterly the country people took this — most Athenians had always lived in the countryside, they were moving households and family shrines, and they were giving up not property but the manner of life they had been born into. Then the plague came into the crowded city and killed a quarter or more of them, by the usual estimates, Pericles among them. They fined him. Then they re-elected him.

That is a population accepting a policy that destroyed its own property and much of its own family, imposed by an assembly it had voted in. No coercion was involved and none would have worked; there was no apparatus to compel forty thousand people to abandon Attica. What did the work was the third column — the belief that the arrangement was theirs — and the arithmetic that the fleet, which the strategy protected, was the thing that fed them. It is the strongest evidence in this study of belief

bearing real weight, and it should be set against everything that follows, because a reader who ends this module thinking Athens ran on force will have read it wrong.

The metic

The third ledger belongs to the resident foreigner, and it is the one that proves the module's thesis, because his exit was open.

What he got: access to the greatest market and the busiest port in the Aegean; physical security; the right to use the courts; the right to own goods, run workshops, lend money, and grow rich, which a great many of them did; and no requirement to believe anything at all.

What he paid: the *metoikion*, a residence tax of twelve drachmas a year for a man and six for a woman. Twelve drachmas is about twelve days of a skilled man's wage — not punishing, and the specialists rightly say so. But note where the tax fell. It was levied not on his property or his income but on his person, and it was a condition of his being permitted to be present. He had also to register in a deme and to nominate a citizen as his *prostates*, his sponsor, through whom he acted at law. Failure to pay the tax, or to have a sponsor, exposed him to a special prosecution, the *graphe aprostasiou*, and on conviction his property was confiscated and he was sold as a slave.

That is the whole logic of the position in one sentence: the free foreigner who did not keep up his payments became a purchased object. The parallel with the citizen's *atimia* is exact and is noted in the modern literature — where a citizen convicted of certain offences was disenfranchised, a non-citizen was sold. The same act, removal from the community, is expressed in whatever currency the person's category permits.

He was also barred from what the community regarded as its own body: he could not own land or a house in Attica without a special grant, and he could not take a contract to work the silver mines, because the wealth beneath the earth was held to belong to the political community. Meanwhile he served as a hoplite, paid the war levy, funded choruses if rich enough, and rowed at Arginusae.

And he could leave. That is the fact that governs his whole ledger. He had come voluntarily, he could go the same way, and Athens knew it — which is why the arrangement offered him security, courts, and a genuine chance to become wealthy, and why so many of them stayed for generations. Athens's treatment of metics was, by the standards of the ancient Mediterranean, notably good. There is no reason to attribute this to virtue. It is what an order does about a population whose compliance it must win rather than compel.

The slave

The fourth ledger is the one where the columns almost empty.

Something between fifty thousand and a hundred thousand slaves were in Attica at the height, and the estimates are wide because the evidence is indirect. They were bought foreigners — Thracians, Scythians, Carians, Syrians, Paphlagonians — and their conditions varied enormously. A skilled craftsman might live apart from his master, run his own workshop, keep what he made beyond an agreed payment, accumulate savings, and buy himself free; some such men grew rich. A household slave in a modest family lived roughly as the family lived. A *paidagogos* walked a boy to school. These men had something in the benefit column and their compliance is not mysterious.

Then there were the mines, and for them the ledger has no benefit column at all. Estimates of the workforce at Laurium run to something like twenty or thirty thousand men at the peak, in shafts twenty-five to fifty metres deep, in cramped and badly ventilated galleries. And here the coldest document in this study belongs, because it is not a denunciation but a business proposal.

Xenophon, writing in the 350s about how Athens might improve its revenues, recalls how it used to be done: *Nicias son of Niceratus once owned a thousand men in the mines, and let them out to Sosias the Thracian, on condition that Sosias paid him an obol a day per man net and filled all vacancies as they occurred.* Hipponicus had six hundred on the same terms at a mina a day; Philemonides three hundred at half a mina. And Xenophon's own proposal is that the state should do it too — that just as private men have built up permanent incomes by becoming slave-owners, so the state should acquire public slaves until there were three for every citizen, leasing them out and living on the rent.

Filled all vacancies as they occurred. The clause is a replacement warranty. It exists because the men died at a rate the contract had to anticipate, and it converts that rate into a term of business. This is what the bottom of the Athenian ledger looks like when an educated Athenian writes it out for a general readership without any sense that he is confessing something: a per-head daily yield, net, with breakage covered by the lessee.

The cost of non-compliance requires little elaboration. Branding on the face with hot iron for runaways, work in chains for the insubordinate, the mill, the whip, and the *basanos* — the rule that a slave's evidence entered an Athenian court only if extracted under torture.

Exit was the whole question, and for two centuries there was none — until an enemy army provided one. In 413 the Spartans fortified Decelea inside Attica and held it permanently, and Thucydides records the consequence in a sentence that is the single

most important piece of evidence in this module: *more than twenty thousand slaves had deserted, a great part of them artisans.*

Twenty thousand. Not a revolt, not a leader, not a programme, no organisation that any source detected — just twenty thousand people walking away in the direction of the fortified position the moment one existed within a day's walk. It had taken an invading army digging in fourteen miles from the city to open the door, and when it opened, the traffic through it was immediate and enormous. Thucydides does not say what became of them, and the general view in the modern literature is that many were sold on by the Peloponnesians, which if right means the door led to a different owner. That is what a closed exit means in practice: not that there is nowhere to go, but that everywhere one can reach is the same.

One structural fact completes this ledger, and it explains something that has puzzled readers of the corpus. Athens, with tens of thousands of slaves, never faced a servile rising. Sparta, eighty miles away, organised its entire society around the fear of one, and got one. The difference is not that Athenian slavery was gentler; the men at Laurium were not treated better than helots. The difference is that Athens's slaves were purchased from a dozen nations, spoke different languages, were dispersed among thousands of separate owners in ones and twos, and had no common homeland, no shared religion, no memory of a conquest, and no territory to reclaim. The Spartan helots were a conquered people, living in their own country, farming their own ancestral land, speaking Greek to each other. **Athens's slave system was safer than Sparta's precisely because it was more completely commodified.** Atomisation was the security, and it was purchased at the price of a permanent trade in human beings from abroad. This is the mechanism behind Finley's pairing from Module 2, seen from the enforcement side.

The allied farmer

The fifth ledger belongs to a man on Samos or Chios or Lesbos who never saw Athens, and it is the one most often written badly, in both directions.

His benefit column was not empty and honesty requires it to be filled in. The Aegean was cleared of piracy and stayed clear; the sea lanes were safe in a way they had not been and would not be again for a long time; his city had access to the largest market in the Greek world and to a currency everyone accepted. And there is a political benefit that Athenian speakers named openly. In the Mytilene debate Diodotus tells the assembly that in all the cities the common people are Athens's friends, and either do not join the oligarchs in revolting or, if forced into it, turn at once on the rebels. The Old Oligarch says the same from the other side, and with irritation: the Athenians

choose those sympathetic to themselves, and every time they have backed the upper class it has gone badly for them. For a poor Chian, Athenian supremacy may well have meant that the local men who would otherwise have owned him politically could not.

His cost column was the machinery this study has already met. Tribute, assessed at Athens, reassessed at Athens, collected by Athenian officers under a decree that appointed commissioners to pursue non-payers and provided a legal process to try them. The requirement to send a cow and a panoply to the Panathenaia and process as colonists do. Walls pulled down. Garrisons and inspectors. Important cases removed to Athenian courts. Cleruchies planted on confiscated land. And at the extreme, published and known: a thousand-odd Mytileneans executed after the revolt of 427 and the island's land divided into lots; the men of Scione and Torone; and at Melos in 416 the killing of every adult male the Athenians took, the sale of the women and children, and the settlement of five hundred colonists of their own.

His belief column was empty and everyone knew it. The allied cities revolted whenever they judged it possible, across seventy years, and when Athens finally fell the news travelled through the Aegean as a liberation.

And his exit was zero — which is the point of the module, and it has a precise mechanical explanation. **A fleet does not occupy territory.** It cannot hold a city the way a garrison holds one; it cannot police a countryside; it cannot stand in a marketplace. What a fleet does supremely well, and almost uniquely, is control the water between places. For an island or a coastal city in the Aegean, that is not one capability among others. It is the whole of the outside world. The Athenian empire's instrument was, functionally, an exit-denial machine: it did not need to be everywhere, because it only had to make sure that no ally could reach anywhere else — no Spartan alliance, no Persian patron, no market that Athens did not sit astride.

Which is exactly why the whole thing ended in the way it did. When Sparta at last acquired a fleet, paid for with Persian money, the door opened, and the empire went in two years.

Reading the Athenian cost column against the framework

One, and it is the module's contribution: exit is not a term in the ledger. It is the variable that sets every other term. Lay the five ledgers side by side and the pattern is not subtle. The metic could leave, and was given courts, security, and a fortune to be made. The citizen could leave but would arrive as a metic, and was given wages, meat, a vote, and an inviolable body — an offer good enough that leaving was pointless. The slave could not leave and was given a whip, and left in tens of thousands

the first week that a door existed. The ally could not leave and was given a tribute assessment, a garrison, and, when he tried, Melos.

The same city did all four of those things at once, under the same laws, voted by the same men, in the same decade. No difference in ideology can account for the variation, because there was no difference in ideology; the assembly that treated metics well and Melians as it did was one assembly on two afternoons. What varies is the door. So: **the cost an order inflicts on a given population is a function of that population's exit options, and can be predicted from them without reference to the order's professed values.** And its corollary, which this corpus should now go back and test on every case in it: **an order's stated creed predicts its treatment of a group far less well than that group's ability to walk away.** Where the corpus has explained differential brutality by racial doctrine or civilisational contempt, it should check first whether the doctrine is tracking something simpler, which is who could leave and who could not.

Two. A single order runs at every point on the gradient simultaneously, and the sorting instrument is the boundary of membership. The framework describes a gradient from an order held up by force to one that runs on the governed's own conviction, and has treated it as a position an order occupies at a given time. Athens occupied the entire gradient at once: conviction at one end, market exchange in the middle, deterrence and then raw coercion at the other, with the same fleet underwriting all of it. **The gradient is therefore not a property of orders. It is a property of the relation between an order and each population inside it.** Which means the question "was Athens a free society or a coercive one" is not hard to answer; it is badly formed. It was both, completely, at the same moment, and the line between the two ran exactly where the deme register ended.

Three, and this answers the framework's own formulation most directly. Where the benefit is real, the penalty can be made entirely of withdrawn benefit — and that is the cheapest coercion available to anybody. *Atimia* required no prison, no executioner, no soldiers, and no budget. It worked because there was something to take away and because several thousand neighbours would enforce it without being asked. But it was available *only* because Athens had first given the citizen a great deal. An order that has given its people nothing has nothing to withdraw, and must reach instead for instruments that cost money to operate: guards, chains, brands, garrisons, an apparatus.

That is the general form, and it is testable across the corpus: **the form of an order's enforcement is set by the size of what it has given, and orders that give little must spend heavily on force.** The Athenian evidence for it is the pair of penalties sitting side by side in the same law — disenfranchisement for the citizen, sale into slavery for the

non-citizen, imposed for parallel offences. It is the same act, removal from the community, denominated in whatever currency the person's category makes available. When the community has given him a place, taking it away is punishment enough. When it has given him nothing, the only thing left to take is his body.

And the discipline that has to close a module like this one. The Athenian citizen was not bribed into acquiescence by a cynical elite; there was no elite doing the bribing, since he was himself in the assembly that voted the pay and drew the lots. He held a genuinely good position, understood it accurately, defended it when it cost him his farm and his family, and would have been a fool to trade it. Nothing here reduces that. What the five ledgers show is only that his good position and the Laurium replacement clause were not two separate facts about the Aegean. They were the same arrangement, read at two different points, and the thing that decided which point a man occupied was not what he deserved or what anyone believed about him. It was whether there was anywhere he could go.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Xenophon, *Ways and Means* (*Poroi*) 4.14–17, is quoted in Dakyns's public-domain translation for Nicias's thousand men leased to Sosias the Thracian at an obol a day per man net with all vacancies filled as they occurred, for Hipponicus's six hundred and Philemonides' three hundred, and for Xenophon's proposal that the state acquire public slaves until there were three for every citizen. Thucydides 7.27.5 is quoted in Crawley's public-domain rendering for the more than twenty thousand slaves who deserted after the fortification of Decelea, a great part of them artisans; 7.27–28 for the effects of the permanent occupation; 2.14–17 and 2.21 for the evacuation of Attica and the country people's resistance to it; 2.65 for the fining and re-election of Pericles; 3.47 for Diodotus on the common people in the allied cities being Athens's friends; 3.50 for the Mytilene executions and land division; and 5.116 for Melos — the killing of the adult males taken, the sale of the women and children, and the five hundred colonists sent afterwards. Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* 18ff, underlies the enumeration of what an *atimos* lost, given here in close paraphrase of the public-domain translation and of the standard lexicographical summary of that passage: no office anywhere in Athenian dominion, no embassy or heraldry, no speech in council or assembly, no entry into the agora, no share in public sanctuaries or sacrifices, no action or testimony in court, and no action brought against him. The Old Oligarch (Pseudo-Xenophon) 3.10–11 is paraphrased for Athenian support of the popular party in allied cities.

Quantities are given with their basis and their uncertainty. Slave numbers in Attica are given as a range of fifty to a hundred thousand because the ancient figures are unusable and the modern estimates diverge widely; the Laurium workforce is given as twenty to thirty thousand following Lauffer and the estimates that descend from him, and flagged as an estimate. Plague mortality is given as a quarter or more on the standard modern reckoning from Thucydides' own figures, which are partial. The *metoikion* at twelve drachmas for men and six for women, the *prostates* requirement, and the *graphe aprostasiou* with confiscation and sale on conviction are securely attested, with the sale penalty resting chiefly on Demosthenes 25.57 and the lexicographers; the wage comparison uses the drachma a day paid to skilled workmen on the Erechtheum. Jury pay at two obols raised to three, and naval pay at a drachma or three obols, are as the sources give them. The fate of the Decelea deserters is not stated by Thucydides and the view that many were sold on by the Peloponnesians is identified in the text as a modern inference.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Lauffer on the Laurium workforce; Whitehead and the subsequent literature on the metic condition, including Sosin's argument that Athenian law recognised no distinction between freeborn and freedman metics; the standard treatments of *atimia*, including the observation that enslavement functioned as the non-citizen's parallel to a citizen's disenfranchisement; Finley on the pairing of freedom and slavery, taken up from Module 2 and here examined from the enforcement side. The comparison with Spartan helotage rests on the structural difference — bought foreigners dispersed among many owners against a conquered people on its own land — and is offered as an explanation of the observed absence of servile revolt at Athens, not as a claim about relative cruelty, on which the evidence does not favour Athens. The tribute machinery, the cleruchies, and the Panathenaic obligations were established in Modules 2 and 3 and are used here without re-argument; the collapse of the empire after Aegospotami belongs to Module 10.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

TO AVOID HAVING TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES

Module 6 · Extraction — three tiers of taxpayer sorted by what was levied on them; the conversion of a service obligation into a cash payment, and how it closed a door that nobody was trying to close; and why the whole financial archive of the empire survives only because a goddess held a share

Three tiers, read off the tax roll

Take the fiscal structure of Athens in isolation, with no knowledge of its constitution, and the order of membership can be reconstructed from it exactly.

The Athenian citizen paid no regular direct tax at all. This was not an oversight and not a concession; it was a principle, and the principle is stated plainly in the ancient material and repeated in the modern literature — direct personal taxation was regarded as a mark of servitude. A free man contributed to his city, but not as a subject renders to a master. What the citizen paid was indirect, on things rather than on himself: harbour dues, market fees, sales taxes, the charges attached to using the courts.

The metic paid a tax on his person. Twelve drachmas a year for a man, six for a woman, levied not on his property and not on his income but on the fact of his being there, and enforced by the prospect of confiscation and sale.

The subject cities paid *phoros* — tribute — assessed at Athens by Athenians, collected by Athenian officers, revised at Athens on a schedule the payers did not set.

Three populations, three instruments, one order. The distance from the centre is measurable in the form of the levy: a tax on transactions for those inside, a tax on the body for those admitted but not belonging, a tax on the community for those held. Everything else in this module elaborates that, and the elaboration begins with the one payment that was not, at the outset, a tax at all.

The founding assessment

In the winter of 478/7, with the Persian fleet driven from the Aegean and Sparta's commander disgraced, the Ionian and island Greeks asked Athens to lead the continuing war. What was constituted at Delos was an alliance with a treasury on the island, meetings in the sanctuary of Apollo, and a board of Athenian officers with a

name that is worth pausing over: *Hellenotamiai*, Treasurers of the Greeks. Not treasurers of Athens. The office title is the alliance's founding claim in two syllables, and it was still the office title seventy years later when the money was unambiguously Athens's.

Aristides made the first assessment, city by city, according to capacity. Thucydides gives the total as four hundred and sixty talents. The figure is contested and should be given as contested: the quota lists after 454 show under four hundred talents being collected from a larger membership, and scholars divide over whether the naval contributions account for the difference or whether the transmitted number is corrupt.

And the assessment offered a choice. Some cities would furnish ships, manned and equipped, for the season's campaigning. Others would furnish money.

The conversion

That choice is the subject of this module, because of what the cities did with it.

Thucydides sets it out in a passage that reads like a coroner's finding. The chief causes of disaffection, he says, were failures to deliver the tribute or the ships, since the Athenians were exacting and gave offence by applying the screw of necessity to men who were neither accustomed to nor disposed for continuous hard work. And then:

For this the allies had themselves to blame; the wish to get off service making most of them arrange to pay their share of the expense in money instead of in ships, and so to avoid having to leave their homes. Thus while Athens was increasing her navy with the funds they contributed, a revolt always found them without resources or experience for war.

Consider the decision as it presented itself to a city council on Andros or at Ephesus in, say, 465. Fitting out a trireme means finding a hull, finding two hundred men, taking them out of the fields and the workshops for the whole sailing season, feeding them, paying them, and sending them somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean from which some will not return. The alternative is a cash payment which the Athenians will accept, after which the men stay home and get the harvest in. There is no year in which the second option is the wrong one. The war against Persia is being prosecuted either way; the alliance's fleet exists either way; the city's obligation is discharged either way. And the men are needed at home.

Now run that decision twenty times.

At the end of it the city has no hulls, because it has built none. It has no crews, because no generation has learned to row in formation. It has no officers, no shipwrights, no dockyard, and no memory of how any of it is done. Its money, meanwhile, has been converted into Athenian hulls manned by Athenian crews commanded by Athenian officers who have been at sea every season for two decades.

The capability has not been destroyed. It has been *transferred*, in annual instalments, by the free choice of the transferor.

This is the closed door of Module 5, and the crucial thing about it is that Athens did not close it. There is no decree, no ultimatum, no confiscation at the founding; the coercive disarmings — Naxos in the 460s, Thasos, Samos, and the rest — came later and were applied to cities that had already made themselves easy to disarm. What closed the door was a sequence of individually correct budget decisions taken by the people who walked through it.

The Athenian evidence contains its own control case, which is why this can be stated with some confidence rather than as a plausible story. Two states never made the conversion: Chios and Lesbos, which kept their own fleets down to the Peloponnesian War. They are precisely the two that were able to attempt a serious revolt — Mytilene on Lesbos in 428, Chios in 412, the latter opening the whole final unravelling of the empire. The cities that had kept the ships were the cities that could act.

The arithmetic of a talent

The tribute figures mean nothing without the cost they were set against, and the cost can be calculated exactly.

A trireme carried about two hundred men. On campaign in the mid-century the rate was a drachma a day. Two hundred drachmas a day is six thousand drachmas a month, and six thousand drachmas is one talent. So: **one trireme, fully manned, costs one talent a month.** Thucydides confirms it from the other direction, reckoning sixty ships at sixty talents a month.

Set the revenue beside it. Thucydides puts the tribute income at six hundred talents a year in 431; the inscriptions suggest a figure nearer four hundred to four hundred and thirty in the same period, and the discrepancy is one of the standing problems of the subject. Take the range as it is. Four to six hundred talents a year buys four to six hundred ship-months: a hundred hulls at sea for four to six months, which is a campaigning season.

The tribute of the Athenian empire was, to within the precision the evidence allows, the running cost of the fleet that collected it. Whether that was designed, or converged on because assessments were pushed upward until they covered the bill, the sources do not say. What it means is that the empire was not a profit-taking operation with a navy attached. It was a navy with a revenue base, and the revenue base existed because the navy did, and the navy existed to hold the revenue base. Each half of it was the other half's justification, which is a description of a machine with no purpose outside itself.

Construction was extra: a hull is usually reckoned at about a talent on the modern estimates, and the *trierarchy* — the liturgy by which a rich Athenian took a warship for a year, kept it in repair, and often commanded it — could cost its holder as much as a talent.

One mina in every talent

In 454/3 the treasury was moved from Delos to Athens. The stated reason was security against a Persian naval recovery, following the destruction of the Athenian expedition in Egypt; the effect was that the allies' money sat on the Acropolis of the leading city, under the control of an assembly in which no ally had a vote.

And from that year Athens began to carve the accounts in stone — or rather, to carve one sixtieth of them. A first-fruits offering, *aparchē*, of one mina in every talent was set aside for Athena, and the quota due from each city was inscribed annually on the Acropolis. The first fifteen years, from 454/3 to 440/39, went onto the four faces of a single block of Pentelic marble nearly four metres high: the largest piece of stone ever used for an inscription in Athens. Eight further years went onto a second block, and after that each year had a stele of its own.

Here is the fact that should stop a reader of this corpus in his tracks. **Not one fragment of the actual tribute records survives.** What we have — the entire quantitative basis for everything anyone has ever written about the finances of the Athenian empire, the names of the cities, their relative burdens, the changes over time, the appearance and disappearance of members — is the goddess's sixtieth. The working ledgers were kept on materials that perished. Athena's share was cut into marble because she was a party to the arrangement, and it is her share, multiplied by sixty by modern editors, that constitutes the archive.

The building accounts survive in the same way and give the link that is usually only inferred. One of the Parthenon accounts records a payment made by the *Hellenotamiai* — the Treasurers of the Greeks — toward the building, in 444/3. The officers of the allied fund paying the builders of the temple: not an accusation, a receipt.

And one further thing the stones do that the books do not. The lists preserve the names of a great many tribute-paying communities that appear nowhere in surviving ancient literature at all. The marble remembers people the histories forgot, which is a fair description of what an imperial revenue record is.

The screw tightened

The machinery grew more elaborate as the war went on, in the way such machinery does.

A decree moved by Cleinias regulated collection: sealed tablets recording what each city sent, so that the amount dispatched could be checked against the amount received; officers appointed to pursue shortfalls; a legal process against those who embezzled or obstructed. The same enforcement was extended to the cow and the panoply owed to the Panathenaia, so that a religious offering acquired a debt-recovery procedure.

In 425/4 came the great reassessment moved by Thoudippos, and it was a very large increase — how large cannot be stated honestly with a single number, because the assessed total on the stone is heavily restored and the figures around fourteen hundred talents that circulate in the handbooks are editorial reconstructions rather than readings. What is not in doubt is that the assessments went up steeply, that cities never previously assessed were added, and that the same decree required every tribute-paying city to send a cow and a panoply to the Great Panathenaia and process as colonists do.

Somewhere in this period belongs the Standards Decree, requiring the allies to use Athenian coins, weights and measures — and it is worth dwelling on, because it demonstrates something this project needs to keep saying about its own evidence. The traditional account is that Athens banned local silver minting outright and closed the allied mints, an act of monetary imperialism. The date has been argued at the 450s, at 425, and at 413. And in 2024 Selene Psoma argued that the standard reading is what she calls a Prussian myth: that it was constructed in 1880 by Wilamowitz, who connected a joke in Aristophanes with some scattered fragments and reconstructed an imperial ban on local coinage — while living through the monetary unification of the newly founded German Empire — and that the numismatic record does not support it, since owl hoards inside imperial territory are few. Whether she is right is not settled. What the episode establishes is that a century of confident statements about Athenian monetary policy rested on a reconstruction shaped by the reconstructor's own decade.

Then, in 413, after the Sicilian catastrophe, the tribute was abolished. In its place Athens imposed on its subjects a tax of a twentieth — five per cent — on all goods carried by sea into or out of their harbours, *which they thought would bring them in more money*. Read structurally that is a significant change: a levy on communities has been replaced by a levy on transactions. It taxes trade rather than membership, it scales with commerce rather than with assessment, it requires customs officers rather than assessors, and it falls on Athenian traders too. It is the most sophisticated fiscal instrument in the whole apparatus, and it was adopted in desperation by a state that had just lost a fleet and an army. The tribute was reinstated within a few years.

Extraction running upward

One half of the Athenian system has not yet been described, and it is the half that inverts the corpus's expectation.

There was no regular direct taxation of Athenian citizens. But there was the *eisphora*, a levy on property imposed by vote in emergencies and falling only on the wealthy; and there were the liturgies. Somewhere between three hundred and twelve hundred men in any year — the number rose in war — were required to fund a public function out of their own estates. The *choregos* trained, costumed and fed a chorus, at a cost commonly exceeding three thousand drachmas. The *trierarch* took a warship for the year. The property threshold for liability is usually put at three or four talents.

The system had two features that made it work without an inspectorate. Performance was public and competitive, so that a man who spent lavishly bought standing that could be cashed in politically — the young Pericles funded Aeschylus's *Persians*; Cimon was famous for his open-handedness. And refusal was policed by *antidosis*: a man who claimed a richer man ought to bear the burden had to offer that man a straight exchange of entire estates, which meant a plea of poverty could be tested by taking it at its word.

So the direction of extraction at Athens ran two ways at once, and neither of them was the one the corpus usually finds. Money came *upward* out of the rich, through an institution that made paying an honour and evasion a public disgrace. Money came *inward* from the subject cities. And money went *outward and downward* to the ordinary citizen, as naval wages, jury pay, festival meat, building work, cleruchy rents, and eventually the theoric fund.

Athens taxed its rich and its subjects, and paid its poor. That sentence is the political economy of the democracy, and it is also, stated plainly, the reason the rich were the only people inside the register with a standing grievance — which is where Module 8 begins.

Reading Athenian extraction against the framework

One, and it is the module's contribution. An extraction mechanism can itself be the disarming mechanism, and it can do that work through the free and rational choices of the people being extracted from. The framework has kept extraction and the floor in separate columns: what is taken, and what makes refusal too expensive. Athens collapses them. The instrument that took the allies' wealth is the same instrument that removed their capacity to refuse, and it did so without a single coercive act at the point of transfer.

The general form is worth stating precisely, because it is testable: **where an obligation may be discharged either in service or in money, and the money option is taken, the capability underlying the service migrates to whoever performs it — and the migration is invisible, because each individual decision is correct.** No deception is required. No plan is required. The relieved party genuinely is relieved, every year, and the accumulated position is subjection.

The corpus has the cases to test this on and they are strikingly consistent in shape. Scutage, by which English tenants-in-chief commuted knight service into cash and the Crown hired professionals with it. The Ottoman *timar* holder giving way to the tax-farm and the salaried standing force. And most exactly, the Subsidiary Alliance in India, under which a prince disbanded his own forces, accepted a Company garrison, and paid for it — the identical instrument two thousand two hundred years later, with the identical result, and with the identical feature that the prince's decision looked, on the day, like a saving. The Athenian data supplies the control that those cases lack: Chios and Lesbos declined the conversion, and Chios and Lesbos were the two that could still act.

Two. The form of the levy identifies the boundary of the political community more reliably than any statute. At Athens the citizen was taxed on his transactions, the metic on his person, and the subject city on its existence. That gradation was not accidental: personal direct taxation was understood as a badge of unfreedom, which is why the free man's contribution was routed through liturgies that could be presented as honour rather than as tribute. This gives the corpus a diagnostic that can be applied to any case in it without reading a word of its constitutional law: **where an obligation is levied on the person rather than on property or transactions, that person is outside the political community, whatever the law says he is.** The hut tax, the poll tax, the *jizya*, the *metoikion* — the instrument is the same and it always marks the same line. And the converse is the more useful half: watch for the moment a state begins levying direct personal taxes on its own members, because it is either redefining them or has stopped being able to afford the alternative.

Three, and this is a caution rather than a finding, but the study needs it on the record once. Everything quantitative in this module rests on a religious tithe. Athens's working accounts are gone; what survives is the sixtieth given to Athena, cut in marble because a goddess was a stakeholder in the arrangement, and reconstructed by modern editors whose arrangement of the fragments is still changing. Beside it sits the Standards Decree, where a century of confident description of Athenian monetary imperialism may turn out to rest on a reading produced in 1880 by a man watching a German currency union.

The framework's addendum on lenses says that the same body of facts can be composed into different narratives and that the composition is usually invisible to the composer. Extraction is where that bites hardest, because extraction is where the numbers are, and numbers do not announce their provenance. **What an order chose to make permanent determines what a later age can know about it; and what a later age is living through determines what it reads there.** Athens chose to make permanent the share it owed a god. That decision, and not any decision about record-keeping, is why this module could be written at all.

And the discipline. The tribute was not a swindle, or not only one. For thirty-odd years it bought something the payers wanted: the Persians stayed out of the Aegean, the pirates were cleared from Skyros and the sea lanes, and the alliance did the thing it had been formed to do. The complaint that arose was not that nothing was delivered but that the delivery continued long after the danger had gone, that the price rose, that the treasury moved, and that the surplus went into a temple. Pericles' answer to that — set out in Module 3 — was a contractor's answer: we were engaged to keep off the barbarian, we are keeping him off, the fee is ours. It is not a foolish argument. It is simply an argument that could only be made by someone who had never had to make it to the people paying.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Thucydides 1.96 for the first assessment at four hundred and sixty talents, the establishment of the *Hellenotamiai*, and the treasury at Delos; 1.99 in Crawley's rendering for the causes of disaffection, the screw of necessity, and the allies' own responsibility in commuting ships into money to avoid leaving their homes, with the consequence that a revolt found them without resources or experience for war; 1.19 for the deprivation of allied ships except Chios and Lesbos; 2.13.3 for annual tribute income of six hundred talents in 431; 6.31 and the associated passages for naval pay at a drachma a day and the sixty-ships-sixty-talents reckoning; and 7.28.4 for the replacement of the tribute in 413 by a five per cent tax on seaborne imports and exports, which they thought would yield more. The inscriptions are cited from the texts and translations at Attic Inscriptions Online: IG I^3 259 and the quota-list series for the one-sixtieth *aparchē* to Athena from 454/3; IG I^3 439 for the payment by the *Hellenotamiai* toward the Parthenon in 444/3; IG I^3 34 (Kleinias) for the collection machinery of sealed tablets and prosecutions; IG I^3 71 (Thoudippos, 425/4) for the reassessment and the Panathenaic obligations; IG I^3 1453 for the Standards Decree.

Figures are given with their uncertainty, which in this module is unusually large. The four hundred and sixty talent assessment is contested, since the quota lists show under four hundred talents collected from a larger membership after 454, and scholars divide between attributing the difference to naval contributions and emending the transmitted figure. Thucydides' six hundred talents for 431 does not agree with the epigraphic evidence for the same years, which points nearer four hundred to four hundred and thirty; both are given. The total of the 425/4 reassessment is deliberately **not** given as a number: the figure on the stone is heavily restored, and the totals commonly cited in the handbooks are editorial reconstructions rather than readings. Trireme construction at roughly a talent, and trierarchic expenditure at up to a talent, are modern estimates. The number of liturgists is given as the three hundred to twelve hundred range found in the specialist literature, varying with war. The one-talent-per-ship-per-month manning cost is a calculation from two hundred men at a drachma a day and is corroborated by Thucydides' own sixty-for-sixty figure.

Disputes are flagged rather than resolved. The Standards Decree is unresolved in date — the 450s, 425, and autumn 413 all have current advocates — and unresolved in substance, since Psoma has argued that the traditional reading of an outright ban on allied minting is a modern construction traceable to Wilamowitz in 1880 and shaped by contemporary German monetary unification, and that the numismatic record does not support it. That argument is reported, not endorsed. The reason for the transfer of the treasury in 454/3 is given as the stated one; the modern literature debates whether the Egyptian disaster was cause or pretext.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Meiggs and Rhodes on the empire and the tribute; Samons on imperial finance; Stroud and Trampedach on the Lapis Primus and the Acropolis epigraphic habit; Gabrielsen on the financing of the fleet; Psoma on the Standards Decree. The observation that direct personal taxation was regarded at Athens as a mark of servitude is drawn from the standard treatments of the Athenian tax regime. The cleruchies and the Panathenaic obligations were established in Modules 2 and 3; the political consequences of taxing the rich to pay the poor belong to Module 8, and the revolts belong to Modules 9 and 10.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

WE ARE BY OURSELVES AT THE LENAEA

Module 7 · Information and suppression — an empire that carved its own accounts in marble and hid nothing from anybody, the one thing it did police, the season in which it could be said, and the audience it decided not to bother arguing with

An order with nothing to hide

The framework's expectation here is sharp and, in the colonial cases, has held every time. An order that governs at a distance runs two accounts of itself. There is the account given at the metropole — lawful, improving, reluctant — and there is the thing the governed actually live through, and the central administrative task is preventing the two from meeting. Despatches are written in one language and operations conducted in another. The seam is held open by distance, and when distance fails — when a newspaper gets a photograph, when a soldier comes home and talks — the order is in trouble not because anything has changed on the ground but because the two ends have touched.

Athens had no distance. The metropole was an assembly of several thousand men on a hill, and most of them had personally rowed to the places in question. The empire was three to five days' sail. The allies came to the city once a year, by law, bringing a cow and a suit of armour and their tribute, and sat in the theatre. There was no gap in which two accounts could be kept apart.

So the module's first job is to establish what an order does about information when concealment is not available to it. The Athenian answer turns out to be the opposite of what a reader of the colonial studies would expect, and it is stranger and more interesting than concealment.

The published empire

Athens monumentalised its extraction.

The tribute quotas were cut into marble on the Acropolis, city by city, year by year, for four decades — the goddess's sixtieth from every payer, on a stone four metres high, in the most conspicuous public space in the Greek world. The building accounts of the temple that the tribute helped pay for were published on stone beside them, including

the payments made by the Treasurers of the Greeks. The decrees regulating tribute collection, the reassessments, the requirement that the allies process at the Panathenaia in the manner of colonists — all inscribed, all set up where anyone could read them, at public expense.

The habit went further than finance. Every Athenian magistrate submitted to a public audit of his conduct and accounts on leaving office. The assembly was open and any citizen could speak in it. And when in 415 the city convulsed over the mutilation of the Herms and the profanation of the Mysteries, condemned a long list of men, and sold their confiscated property at auction, it published *that* too: the sale records survive on stone, itemising the goods of the condemned down to furniture and kitchenware, with buyers and prices. Athens published its own purge, complete with the inventory of what was taken off the shelves.

And most remarkably of all, as Module 3 established, the tribute itself was carried into the theatre at the City Dionysia, divided into talents and displayed in the orchestra before a full house — a house which, at that particular festival, contained the representatives of the cities that had paid it.

There is no seam here at all. The facts of the Athenian empire were not concealed from the Athenians, from the allies, or from any Greek who could walk up to the Acropolis and read. They were the single most thoroughly documented set of imperial accounts in the ancient world, and they were documented on purpose, in stone, in public.

What was policed instead

And yet there is a suppression record. It is small, it is precise, and every item in it is about the same thing.

The first is the earliest recorded banning of a play in European history. Around 493 or 492, shortly after the Persians took and destroyed Miletus at the end of the Ionian revolt — a city Athens had encouraged and failed to save — the tragedian Phrynichus produced *The Capture of Miletus*. Herodotus records what happened: the whole theatre burst into tears, and the Athenians fined him a thousand drachmas *for reminding them of their own troubles*, and ordered that no one should ever produce the play again.

A thousand drachmas is roughly three years of a working man's wages. And notice what was suppressed. Not a criticism of Athens, not an attack on a politician, not a dangerous idea. A dramatisation of something that had actually happened, to people the Athenians regarded as kin, which the Athenians had helped provoke and had then abandoned. The first theatrical ban on record is a ban on being made to feel it.

The second is a prosecution, and it is the one that answers the question directly. In 426 Aristophanes — or Callistratus, who produced for him — staged *Babylonians* at the City Dionysia. The play is lost, but the ancient commentary on his next play reports that it attacked the magistracies and the politicians and, apparently, the city's treatment of its allies. Cleon, then the most powerful man in Athens, hauled the poet before the Council and indicted him for wronging and insulting the people and the Council, on the ground — and this is the operative phrase — that he had disgraced the city *in the presence of foreigners* at the City Dionysia. He may also have challenged Aristophanes' citizenship for good measure.

The third is the answer, and Aristophanes delivered it from the stage. At the Lenaia the following winter, in *Acharnians*, his hero steps forward and says:

Spectators, be not angered if, although I am a beggar, I dare in a comedy to speak before the people of Athens of the public weal; comedy too can sometimes discern what is right. I shall not please, but I shall say what is true. Besides, Cleon shall not be able to accuse me of attacking Athens before strangers; we are by ourselves at the festival of the Lenaea; the period when our allies send us their tribute and their soldiers is not yet.

Read that as an administrative fact rather than as a joke, because it is both.

The Lenaia fell in the month of Gamelion, in the depth of winter, when the Aegean was effectively closed to shipping and no foreigner could get to Athens. The City Dionysia fell in Elaphebolion, at the opening of the sailing season, which is precisely why the tribute came in then and why the allied delegations were present to see it displayed. Two festivals, two months apart, in the same theatre, before the same citizens — and at one of them there were outsiders in the seats and at the other there were not.

And the licence to speak differed accordingly. Aristophanes says so out loud, as a boast, to an audience that plainly understood the distinction and found it a perfectly ordinary thing to be reminded of.

That is the Athenian seam, and it is made of weather. Not distance, which Athens did not have; season. For most of the year the internal argument of the Athenian democracy was inaudible outside Attica because nobody could sail there to hear it.

The limits of the policing

It should not be overstated, and the strongest evidence against overstating it is Aristophanes' own career.

There are two alleged decrees restricting comic ridicule — one attributed to Morychides around 440/39 and said to have been repealed within three years, another to Syrakosios around 415. Both rest on brief notes by ancient commentators on

Aristophanes, both are contested, and neither can be shown to have had any effect. The decisive evidence is the plays themselves. Aristophanes put Cleon on stage as a bullying Paphlagonian slave while Cleon was the leading politician in Athens, named him, accused him of taking bribes, and won first prize. He staged Socrates in a basket. He had a chorus tell an Athenian audience that its jurors were being fattened on three obols like domestic animals. He was not exiled, fined, or silenced. The one time a prosecution was actually brought, it failed to stop him, and his response was to describe the prosecution on stage the following year.

Nor did Athens build an apparatus. There was no censor, no licensing board, no official chronicle, no state poet, no bureau that vetted anything. The archives were kept but not controlled; the assembly was not managed; there was no instrument for producing an official version of events and no office charged with doing it.

The audience Athens did not court

Which brings us to the comparison that provoked this module, and the comparison holds up under examination in an unexpected direction.

When Fascist Italy went into Ethiopia, the effort that mattered was not aimed at Ethiopians, who were not going to be persuaded, and not primarily at Italians, who were already onside. It was aimed at London, Paris and Berlin. The Ministry of Popular Culture, the directives to editors, the courting of foreign correspondents, the elaborate legalism about civilisation and slavery — all of it addressed to a European audience whose governments held the instruments that could stop the thing: the Suez Canal, an oil embargo, a League vote, an alliance. Italy needed European *forbearance*, and forbearance had to be bought with a story.

Athens made claims outward too, but they were monuments rather than arguments. A treasury at Delphi from the Marathon spoils; dedications at Olympia; the Persian War memorials; festivals that foreigners attended; the funeral oration's claim that the city was the school of Hellas. What Athens conspicuously did not do was argue, before the Greek world, that its empire was just.

And it lost that argument completely. Thucydides has the Corinthians tell the Spartan assembly that while they fuss about overthrowing a single tyrant here and there, they have allowed a *tyrant city* to be established in the midst of Greece. And when the war came, Thucydides — an Athenian, writing about his own city — recorded the state of Greek opinion without softening it:

The good wishes of men made greatly for the Lacedaemonians, especially as they proclaimed themselves the liberators of Hellas. No private or public effort that could help them in speech or action was omitted; each thinking that the cause suffered wherever he

could not himself see to it. So general was the indignation felt against Athens, whether by those who wished to escape from her empire, or were apprehensive of being absorbed by it.

Most of the Greek world wanted Athens to lose, and Athens knew it, and its leading men responded not by contesting the charge but by conceding it — the empire is a tyranny, unjust to have taken and dangerous to release; the strong do what they can and the weak accept what they must.

The reason is not that Athens was more honest than Italy, and it is not that Athens was indifferent to reputation, which it manifestly was not. **It is that Greek opinion, unlike European opinion in 1935, had no instruments.** The Athenian position did not rest on other Greek states choosing not to intervene. It rested on their being unable to — and Module 6 established exactly why: the allies had spent forty years commuting their naval obligations into cash, and had no fleets. Sparta was a land power without ships or money. Persia was quiet. Disapproval without a navy is weather.

So Athens did not buy Greek opinion, because it did not need to, and the cost of that decision was deferred rather than avoided. When the deferral ended — when Persian gold finally paid for a Peloponnesian fleet after 412 — the accumulated opinion cashed in immediately and completely. The allies did not need to be persuaded to revolt; the case against Athens had been made and won a generation earlier, and Sparta arrived with ships and a slogan everybody already believed.

The seam that actually mattered

Where information failure did serious damage to Athens, it was not at the edges of the empire. It was in the assembly.

In the winter of 416/15 the Athenians voted to conquer Sicily, and Thucydides remarks that most of them were ignorant of the island's size and of the number of its inhabitants, and did not realise they were undertaking a war not much smaller than the one they were already fighting. Modern scholarship has pointed out that this is not literally true — Athens had had dealings with Sicily for decades and a great deal of information was available — and the correction improves the point rather than weakening it. The information circulating was hearsay, interested reports from Segestan envoys who turned out to have misrepresented their own wealth, and images from the tragic stage. The sovereign body was not starved of information. It was saturated with the wrong kind, and had no mechanism whatever for distinguishing. Nicias, trying to frighten the assembly out of the expedition by describing the enormous force it would require, succeeded only in getting a larger expedition voted.

The following summer came the affair of the Herms and the Mysteries: statues mutilated across the city in one night, denunciations, rewards offered for information,

immunity granted to informers, men executed and others fleeing, and — Thucydides is explicit — the whole thing taken as evidence of a conspiracy to overthrow the democracy. The most open city in Greece spent a season in an informer panic, and then published the auction records.

And in 411 the democracy actually fell, and it fell through the one channel Athens could not see into. The oligarchic clubs, the *hetaireiai*, were the single genuinely covert institution in Athenian life — private, sworn, longstanding, and invisible in a political system that published everything else. Thucydides' account of the coup describes a city paralysed less by force than by ignorance: no citizen could tell how many the conspirators were, so no one dared speak against them, and men who might have resisted assumed themselves alone.

Everything about the money was on the Acropolis. Nothing about the clubs was anywhere.

Reading Athenian information against the framework

One, and it is the module's principal correction. Where the facts cannot be hidden, what gets policed is not the fact but the voice — specifically, who is permitted to hear a member of the order say what he thinks of it. The framework has treated the seam as a device for keeping two versions of events apart, maintained by distance. Athens had no distance and kept no second version; it published the tribute figures in marble and paraded the tribute itself through the theatre in front of the people who had paid it. And it still had a suppression record, and every item in that record is about the presence of outsiders. Phrynichus was punished for making Athenians weep over what had happened to Miletus. Aristophanes was prosecuted for embarrassing the city *before foreigners*. And his defence was that this time the foreigners could not get there.

So the refined proposition: **information control is not principally about what outsiders know. It is about what outsiders witness insiders saying.** The Mytileneans knew the tribute figures perfectly well; the figures were carved on the Acropolis and displayed in the orchestra. What the Athenians did not want a Mytilenean in the audience to see was an Athenian standing up in the Athenian theatre and calling the treatment of Mytilene disgraceful — because that is not information, it is a crack in the wall, and a subject who sees a crack calculates differently from one who merely knows the assessment.

Two, and this answers the question the module was set. An imperial order invests in narrative directed at its peers in proportion to how far its position depends on peer forbearance rather than peer incapacity. Italy needed a story for

London and Paris because Britain and France held instruments — the canal, the oil, the League — and the invasion required them not to use them; the story was the purchase price of inaction. Athens needed no story for Sparta or Corinth or Thebes, because Greek disapproval was not attached to anything that floated. The allies had converted their fleets into cash instalments; the disapprovers had no navy; and Athens accordingly let the argument go by default and said plainly, in its own assembly, that the empire was a tyranny.

This is testable across the corpus and the test runs both ways. **The volume of an imperial power's propaganda aimed at rival powers is a direct measurement of its own estimate of its vulnerability to them.** Where a power argues loudly to its peers, look for the instrument it fears. Where a power does not argue at all, look for the incapacity it is relying on — and then watch what happens when that incapacity ends, because accumulated hostile opinion does not decay while it waits. It cashes in full, at once, the moment somebody hands it a fleet.

Three, offered to Module 8 rather than settled here. Radical publicity of the state's own accounts gives no protection against covert coordination among its members, and may actively reduce it. Athens published its finances, its purges, its magistrates' audits and its imperial assessments, and was overthrown from within by a network of dining clubs about which nothing was published anywhere. The mechanism worth testing is that in an order accustomed to seeing everything written on stone, citizens come to treat the absence of a record as the absence of a thing — so that the one institution which never appears in the record becomes, for that reason, the hardest to reckon with. Thucydides' Athenians in 411 were not deceived about any fact. They simply could not count their enemies, in a city where everything countable had been counted.

And the discipline. Nothing here should be read as making Athens a censoring state, because on any comparative measure it was the least censoring state of the ancient world and one of the least censoring in recorded history before the modern age. A citizen could stand in the theatre and call the most powerful man in the city a thief, by name, to his face, at a state festival, and take the first prize for it. That is the fact, and it dwarfs the exceptions. The exceptions are worth this much attention only because they are so few and so consistent: three episodes across a century, all of them turning not on what was said but on who was in the room, and one of them explained from the stage by the man who had been prosecuted for it, in a winter month when the sea was shut.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Herodotus 6.21.2 for the Phrynichus affair — the theatre in tears, the fine of a thousand drachmas *for reminding them of their own troubles* (ὡς ὑπομνήσαντα οἰκήια κακά), and the order that no one should ever produce the play again — with the corroborating notices in Strabo 14.1.7, Plutarch *Moralia* 814B, Aelian *Varia Historia* 13.17, and the scholia to Aristophanes' *Wasps*. Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 496–508, is quoted in the public-domain translation available on Perseus and in the Project Gutenberg text, with Frere's independent public-domain rendering consulted and agreeing in substance; the passage is the one in which Dicaeopolis observes that Cleon cannot accuse him of attacking Athens before strangers because they are by themselves at the Lenaia and the allies have not yet come with their tribute. Thucydides 1.122.3 for the Corinthians' *tyrant city* set up in the midst of Greece; 2.8.4–5 in Crawley's rendering for the goodwill of men going to the Lacedaemonians as proclaimed liberators of Hellas and for the general indignation against Athens; 6.1 for the assembly's ignorance of Sicily's size and population; 6.27–29 and 6.53–61 for the Herms and the Mysteries, the rewards to informers, and the reading of the affair as a conspiracy against the democracy; 8.66 for the paralysis of 411, in which no citizen could estimate the number of the conspirators. The inscriptions used here — the tribute quota lists, the Parthenon accounts, the Kleinias and Thoudippos decrees, and the sale records of the property confiscated in 415 (the so-called Attic Stelai) — were established in Modules 2, 3 and 6 and are used here for the fact of publication rather than for their contents.

Disputes are given as disputes. Cleon's prosecution of Aristophanes or Callistratus over *Babylonians* is known only from the ancient commentary on *Acharnians*; the charge is reported there as wrongdoing and insult toward the demos and the Council on the ground of disgracing the city before foreigners at the City Dionysia, possibly with a challenge to the poet's citizenship, and the details cannot be independently confirmed. The alleged decrees restricting comic ridicule — Morychides in 440/39, repealed within three years, and Syrakosios around 415 — rest on scholia and are contested in the specialist literature; they are reported here as alleged and their practical effect is treated as unproven, on the evidence of the surviving plays. Thucydides' statement that most Athenians were ignorant of Sicily is flagged as a claim that recent scholarship holds to be literally false, with the more defensible reading — that the information circulating was hearsay, interested testimony and material from the tragic stage — given in its place and credited. The seasonal argument depends on the ordinary Greek practice of suspending open-sea sailing in winter and on the placement of the

Lenaia in Gamelion and the City Dionysia in Elaphebolion; both are standard, and the inference that the Lenaia was therefore free of allied delegations is Aristophanes' own, not a modern reconstruction.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Foley and the commentary tradition on *Acharnians* and the Cleon indictment; the recent work questioning the literal truth of Thucydides' Sicilian ignorance topos; the standard treatments of the Attic Stelai and of the Athenian epigraphic habit noted in Module 6. The comparison with Fascist Italy's information effort in the Ethiopian war draws on the general historiography of the Ministry of Popular Culture and the international politics of sanctions in 1935–36; no Italian primary material is quoted here, and the comparison is offered as a structural contrast to be tested rather than as a claim about Italian sources. The oligarchic clubs and the coup of 411 are named here only so far as the information question requires, and are the business of Modules 8 and 10.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

WHO ALSO SUFFERED MOST SEVERELY

Module 8 · The default — why a class that was taxed by the poor, judged by the poor, and barred from monopolising office spent a century defending the arrangement that did it; the one thing the poor never took; and the thirty months in which the arithmetic inverted

The question, stated exactly

The observation this module tracks is not about the ordinary person, who was priced in Module 5. It is about the stratum above him — the men with standing and means, the ones who staff the apparatus, command the forces, fund the public works, and run the localities. The arrangements that lasted were the ones set up so that each of those men, simply by defending his own position, defended the whole. Nobody had to like anybody. No cabal was required. Men who despised each other coordinated to keep the thing running because the thing running was the condition of each of them keeping what he had.

And the same observation identifies where fracture comes from. Not from below. From a group inside the arrangement that has standing and means and has stopped benefiting.

Athens makes this question harder than usual and therefore more instructive, because Athens had no legal aristocracy. There was no rank, no entail, no reserved office, no hereditary council, no immunity. So the module's first task is to say who the hierarchy actually was in a state that had abolished the formal marks of one.

Naming the stratum

They are identifiable, and they are identifiable by function rather than by title.

There were the **liturgists** — somewhere between three hundred and twelve hundred men in a given year, rising in war, whose property crossed a threshold usually put at three or four talents, and who were consequently required to fund a warship for a year or a chorus for a festival out of their own estates.

There were the **generals** — ten a year, and the only significant office in the constitution filled by election rather than by lot, with no limit on re-election. For a

century and a half those places went overwhelmingly to men of the old families: Miltiades, Cimon, Pericles, Nicias, Alcibiades.

There were the **rhetores**, the men who actually stood up and moved decrees. Any citizen might; a small number habitually did, and they were, with conspicuous and much-resented exceptions like Cleon, men who had been able to pay for training in speech.

There were the **hetaireiai** — the clubs. Thucydides describes them in a single deadly phrase as the associations that already existed in the city for help in lawsuits and elections. Private, sworn, aristocratic, of long standing, and entirely absent from the epigraphic record that documented everything else.

There was the **cavalry**, on the order of a thousand men, self-mounting and self-conscious.

And overseas there were the **allied elites** — the local men Athens dealt with and in many cases installed: proxenoi, democratic leaders whom Athens backed against their own oligarchs, and after 411 the oligarchs whom Athens's own oligarchs tried to back instead. These are the administrators of a colonial study, and they belong in this module for the same reason.

The puzzle

Now state the problem sharply, because it is genuinely strange.

A rich Athenian in 430 was taxed by men poorer than himself, in a war levy voted by an assembly he could not control. He was required to fund a trireme or a chorus at his own expense, and if he pleaded poverty a rival could demand a straight exchange of estates. He was tried, if prosecuted, by several hundred jurors drawn by lot from men who lived on three obols a day. He could be removed from the city for ten years by a show of ostraka without any charge being stated. He could not buy an office, inherit one, or hold most of them more than once. And the political career available to him — the generalship — was annually renewable at the pleasure of the same crowd, which fined Pericles, exiled Thucydides son of Olorus, executed generals after Arginusae, and destroyed Alcibiades twice.

Why did such a man defend the arrangement?

And the puzzle has a hard edge that most accounts skate over. In roughly two centuries of sovereign rule by a poor majority, the Athenian demos **never redistributed land and never cancelled debts.** Not once. The archon, on entering office, proclaimed that each should hold and control until the end of his term what he held before. And the oath transmitted as the jurors' oath in Demosthenes contains an

undertaking not to permit private debts to be cancelled nor lands nor houses belonging to Athenian citizens to be redistributed.

That oath text needs a warning. It survives as a document embedded in the manuscripts of Demosthenes' speech, and Max Fränkel argued that large parts of it are a later interpreter's elaboration; most specialists follow him in rejecting much of it, and the clause about land and debts cannot be treated as securely fifth- or fourth-century wording. But the behavioural record does not depend on the document. Whatever the jurors swore, the demos did not do it, in two hundred years, at any point, including years when it was starving.

Five reasons the default held

One: the empire paid the rich far more than the democracy cost them. This is the largest term and it is usually left out. The men who held the mining concessions at Laurium were rich Athenians — Nicias let out a thousand men in the mines at an obol a day each; Hipponicus six hundred; Philemonides three hundred. The men who profited from the traffic through the Piraeus, the largest port in the Greek world, were rich Athenians. The men who drew the largest cleruchy allotments, lent at interest across a currency zone Athens dominated, and had their property abroad protected by a fleet paid for out of other cities' tribute were rich Athenians. Against that stream, a trierarchy costing up to a talent in a year in which one was called is an expense, not a confiscation. The arrangement taxed him visibly and enriched him invisibly, and both were true.

Two: the liturgy was not only a tax. It was the ladder. In a constitution with no purchasable office and no inherited rank, conspicuous public expenditure was the one currency in which private wealth could be converted into public standing. Pericles made his early mark funding Aeschylus's *Persians*; Cimon's open-handedness was proverbial and political. A man who spent well on a chorus was owed something by several thousand people who had watched it. So the levy that looks like extraction was also the entrance fee to the only career worth having — which converts a grievance into an investment, and does so without anybody needing to explain the trick to anybody.

Three: the generalship was theirs, and the exemption was the deal. Athens allotted the archonships, the Council, the juries, the boards, and the day-chairmanship of the state. It did not allot the command of fleets and armies. That exception is always explained, correctly, on grounds of competence — you cannot draw a naval commander out of an urn. But look at what it does structurally. It leaves one channel open at the top, requiring exactly the things an aristocratic upbringing supplied: reputation, connections, training in speech, the habit of command, and the money to

have acquired all three. **The demos kept sovereignty and the elite kept command.** Nobody wrote that down and nobody negotiated it. It is the coordination point of the whole Athenian arrangement, and it held until the arrangement did.

Four: the courts, which the rich resented, were also the guarantee. The jury of several hundred poor men is the instrument the Old Oligarch complains about most bitterly. It is also the instrument that, year after year, declined to touch the one thing it could have taken by a show of hands. A rich Athenian's estate was in the gift of men who would never have to justify taking it — and they did not take it. Over a century that non-event is not an absence of evidence. It is the evidence.

Five: every alternative was worse, and riskier. A tyranny puts one family above everyone and levels the rest; Athens had lived through that and remembered it as the period when hostages were held on Naxos and the weapons were taken out of the houses. An oligarchy is superb if one is inside the circle and fatal if one is outside it — and no member of a class of a thousand can know in advance which he will be, because the whole point of an oligarchy is that it is smaller than the class it comes from. The democracy, by contrast, guaranteed every propertied Athenian a floor: a vote, a court, an inviolable body, a shot at the generalship, and no possibility of being purged by his peers. For a class that could not coordinate on who would be in the smaller circle, the larger circle was the risk-averse choice. That is not affection. It is insurance, and it is exactly the kind of reasoning a default is made of.

A correction, from the source

Before the fracture, one piece of evidence that should demolish a comfortable reading of all this.

It is tempting to picture a rapacious demos voting cruelties against the allies while decent men of property counselled restraint. Thucydides records the opposite, in Phrynichus's analysis of the oligarchic plot in 411 — and Phrynichus was himself an oligarch, arguing against his own side's plan, which makes him a hostile witness to the point he is making.

He tells the conspirators that offering oligarchy to the allied cities will not bring the rebels in or hold the loyal, because the allies will not prefer servitude under any Athenian constitution to freedom; and then the sentence that matters. The cities, he says, believe that the so-called better classes will prove just as oppressive as the commons, since it is those men who originate, propose, and mostly profit from the measures against the confederates. Indeed if it depended on the better classes, he says, the allies would be put to death without trial and with violence, whereas the commons are their refuge and the chastiser of such men.

The Athenian elite were the empire's hawks. The subjects knew it, and preferred the demos as a check on them. Nothing in this study licenses reading the Athenian upper class as a restraining influence on Athenian imperialism; on the best contemporary evidence they were its authors and its principal beneficiaries, and the poor jurors who sat in judgement on returning governors were, from a Samian point of view, the nearest thing to a court of appeal.

The fracture, and it can be dated

Now the question the module exists for: when does a group with standing and means stop benefiting?

The Athenian elite had complained about the democracy continuously for a century. The Old Oligarch wrote a pamphlet explaining how well designed it was and how much he hated it. Thucydides son of Melesias organised a conservative bloc and had his followers sit together in the assembly to look more numerous. The comic poets flayed the demagogues annually. Plato's circle despised the whole thing.

None of that produced a coup. Complaint is not a predictor.

What produced a coup was an arithmetic crossing over, and it crossed over in about thirty months.

In 413 the Sicilian expedition was annihilated. Thucydides describes the moment the news was believed: they saw that they had not sufficient ships in their docks, or money in the treasury, or crews for the ships, and began to despair of salvation.

In the same year the Spartans fortified Decelea inside Attica and held it permanently. This fell almost entirely on the propertied. The countryside was theirs — the estates, the olives, the vines, the farm buildings. More than twenty thousand slaves deserted, a great part of them craftsmen, and slaves were the rich man's capital stock. The Laurium operation, which was rich men's leases worked by rich men's slaves, was crippled. The cavalry rode out daily and their horses went lame on the rocky ground or were wounded. Everything the city needed now came by sea and at greater cost.

And simultaneously the demands rose. The war levy on property was imposed. The thousand-talent reserve, which had been protected by a standing death penalty for even proposing to touch it, was opened. The tribute was abolished and replaced with a five per cent harbour tax in the hope it would yield more. Eventually the golden statues of Victory were melted down for coin. And the trierarchy — the signature obligation of this class — began to be shared between two men per ship, which is the plainest possible evidence that one man could no longer carry it.

So: contributions rising steeply, returns at zero, and the collateral physically destroyed. The class was paying more into an arrangement that had stopped paying anything out and had lost the assets that made paying possible.

Thucydides names the result in a subordinate clause, and it is the most efficient sentence in this module. Describing how the plot took hold, he writes that the higher class, *who also suffered most severely from the war*, now conceived great hopes of getting the government into their own hands and of triumphing over the enemy.

That is the fracture mechanism in eight words, from a contemporary who was himself of that class.

What made disaffection into a coup

Disaffection alone does not overturn a constitution. What converted it was an external patron offering a substitute revenue.

Alcibiades, in exile and attached to the satrap Tissaphernes, sent word to the leading men of the armament that if there were an oligarchy in place of the democracy that had banished him, he would come home and bring the King's friendship with him. The officers at Samos took it up at once. Emissaries crossed to Athens.

And then the extraordinary part, which is the reason this module can say what it says with confidence: **the Athenian assembly voted for it.**

Peisander faced a hostile house — speakers against, the enemies of Alcibiades denouncing the scandal, the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes protesting on behalf of the Mysteries. So he took each opponent aside individually and asked one question: given that the Peloponnesians had as many ships as Athens, more cities in alliance, and the King and Tissaphernes supplying money, of which the Athenians had none left, did he have any hope of saving the state unless someone brought the King over? Each said no. And Peisander then said, plainly:

This we cannot have unless we have a more moderate form of government, and put the offices into fewer hands, and so gain the King's confidence, and forthwith restore Alcibiades, who is the only man living that can bring this about. The safety of the state, not the form of its government, is for the moment the most pressing question, as we can always change afterwards whatever we do not like.

Thucydides' account of the vote should be read slowly. The people were at first highly irritated at the mention of an oligarchy; but upon understanding clearly from Peisander that this was the only resource left, they took counsel of their fears, and promised themselves some day to change the government again, and gave way.

The Athenian demos abolished the Athenian democracy, by vote, in the assembly, because it needed money and there was nowhere else to get it. Nothing in this corpus

demonstrates more cleanly that a default is an arithmetic rather than a faith. The most self-conscious, most thoroughly formed, most institutionally invested citizenry in the ancient world voted its own constitution away in an afternoon, having first satisfied itself that the alternative was defeat — and having told itself it could reverse the decision later.

And the machinery of the coup required no construction. Peisander went round the clubs which already existed in the city for help in lawsuits and elections, and urged them to combine. An apparatus of elite coordination that had spent generations fixing juries and arranging elections was converted to constitutional demolition in a single season, because it was already there, already sworn, and already invisible.

Why it lasted four months

The Four Hundred took Athens. They did not take the fleet, and the fleet was at Samos.

The armament there refused the change, deposed the officers implicated in it, bound itself by oath to maintain the democracy and to prosecute the war, and appointed Alcibiades — of all people — as its general. Thucydides reports the reasoning that followed and it is worth restating exactly: the men at Samos concluded that it was not they who had seceded from the city but the city from them, since they possessed the ships and could compel the cities to give them what they needed just as well from Samos as from Athens.

Read that as a structural claim and it is correct. The fleet was the revenue-collecting instrument, the food supply route, and the decisive arm all at once. Whoever held it held the state's income and the state's power, and the men holding it were tens of thousands of thetes whose position under the democracy was excellent and under an oligarchy was nothing.

The Four Hundred lasted about four months. What followed was the regime of the Five Thousand, a franchise limited to those who could equip themselves as hoplites — and Thucydides, who was no democrat, wrote that during its first period the Athenians appear to have had the best government they had in his lifetime. Full democracy returned within roughly a year.

404, and the rebuilding

The oligarchy of 404 is a different case and should be kept separate from 411, because it was imposed by a victorious foreign power rather than generated by an internal crossover. Sparta installed the Thirty after the surrender.

Two things about it belong here. First, what an oligarchy does when it has no revenue: it extracts from the people nearest to hand. The Thirty executed a large number of Athenians — the figure of fifteen hundred that circulates comes from fourth-century orators writing to condemn them and should be treated as rhetorical rather than counted — and they went after wealthy metics explicitly for their money, seizing Lysias's family shield factory and killing his brother Polemarchus. A settlement with nothing coming in from outside began eating the propertied stratum immediately below itself, which is precisely what the default predicts when the fund runs out and the circle has been drawn small.

Second, what happened afterwards. The democrats came back from Phyle and the Piraeus, the Thirty fell within a year, and the restored democracy swore an amnesty — *mē mnēsikakein*, not to recall past wrongs — covering everything but the Thirty themselves and a handful of others. After a civil war, with the dead unavenged and the confiscated property largely unreturned, they undertook not to prosecute, and they very largely kept it. That is a default being deliberately rebuilt by men who had recently been killing each other, and it is among the most remarkable acts recorded in this corpus.

Reading the Athenian default against the framework

One, and it is the module's contribution. The crossover is datable, and complaint is not the signal. The Athenian elite grumbled for a hundred years and produced nothing. It defected in thirty months when its contributions rose steeply while its returns went to zero and its capital was physically destroyed. The proposition to carry forward is therefore: **the reliable predictor of elite defection is not the volume or bitterness of elite complaint but the moment at which a group's contribution to the arrangement exceeds its extraction from it — and that moment can be dated from fiscal and property records rather than inferred from what anybody said.** The Athenian series is unusually good for testing this because the evidence is fiscal: the emergency levy, the opening of the reserve, the replacement of tribute with a transaction tax, the melting of the dedications, and above all the splitting of the trierarchy between two men. Each of those is a dated document of a class that could no longer carry what it had been carrying. Grievance is constant background noise. The ledger is the instrument.

Two. Where a hierarchy's internal peace is bought with revenue taken from a third party, it is not a settlement between the parties at all. It is a joint claim on a fund, and it lasts precisely as long as the fund. The Athenian rich and the Athenian poor did not reconcile their interests. They were both drawing on the Aegean. The

poor drew wages, jury pay, cleruchy lots and grain; the rich drew concessions, trade, protected property abroad, and the command of the instrument that collected it all. Neither had to like the other and the record suggests neither much did. When Sicily and Decelea closed the account, the alignment did not decay gradually — it inverted inside two years, and men who had funded triremes for three decades took Persian money to abolish the constitution.

This is the corpus's colonial finding seen from inside the metropole. The settler-administrator-chief coalitions of the colonial cases held while the metropolitan subsidy and the extractive flow held, and dissolved when they stopped, and were always described at the time as failures of loyalty. They were failures of revenue. **An externally funded default is not more fragile than an internally funded one in ordinary weather; it is differently fragile, because it can break at full strength, without any internal grievance changing at all, the moment the third party stops paying or the instrument of collection is lost.**

Three. An order survives the defection of its elite if the decisive arm's default is separately funded and physically separate. The Four Hundred held the city and fell in four months, because the fleet at Samos was in commission, drawing its own pay, under its own generals, a hundred and fifty miles away, and its men had everything to lose from the change. This is where the proposition this study was set up to test — that liberty tracks the manning requirement of the decisive arm — finally holds, and it holds in a narrow and precise form that the seed did not anticipate. The manning requirement does not produce liberty; Module 1 showed the demos already had leverage in 508 with no fleet in existence. **What the manning requirement produces is a veto — and the veto is exercisable only when the manned arm is somewhere the plotters are not.** Had the fleet been beached in the Piraeus in the summer of 411, the Four Hundred would very likely have held Athens. It was at Samos. The most important constitutional fact of the year was a question of geography.

Four, and this should be the last word, because it is the hinge. For a century and a half a poor sovereign majority could have voted itself the land of the rich by a show of hands on any morning it chose, and never did. That non-event is what made every calculation in this module work. The rich Athenian paid heavily, was judged by his inferiors, could be exiled without charge, and knew that his estate was never seriously in question. When the empire could no longer make that bargain profitable he abandoned it within two years — which tells us what the bargain had been. But for a hundred years before that he had defended, at his own expense and with his own son at the oar or in the front rank, a constitution that could have stripped him at any moment and did not.

So: **the durability of a hierarchy is measured less by what the powerful manage to extract than by what the powerless demonstrably decline to take.** Where the second figure is high — where a sovereign majority has an obvious, lawful, unopposable route to expropriation and does not use it — the arrangement has a reserve of stability that no amount of coercive apparatus can substitute for. Athens had that reserve, spent a century drawing on it, and lost it not to a revolt of the poor but to a bookkeeping crisis among the rich.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Thucydides is quoted throughout in Crawley's public-domain translation: 8.1 for the realisation after Sicily that there were neither ships in the docks nor money in the treasury nor crews for the ships; 8.48 for Phrynichus's argument that the allied cities regarded the better classes as the originators, proposers and principal beneficiaries of the measures against them and the commons as their refuge and chastiser, and for the clause describing the higher class as those who also suffered most severely from the war; 8.53 for Peisander's question to each opponent in turn and his statement that the safety of the state, not the form of its government, was the pressing question, and that they could always change afterwards whatever they did not like; 8.54 for the people taking counsel of their fears and giving way, and for Peisander going round the clubs which already existed in the city for help in lawsuits and elections; 8.75–76 for the army at Samos deposing its officers, swearing to maintain the democracy, and reasoning that the city had seceded from them rather than they from the city, which is given here as close paraphrase rather than as a quotation; 8.97 for the judgement that the Five Thousand gave the Athenians the best government of Thucydides' lifetime; 7.27 for the twenty thousand deserting slaves and the effects of Decelea, established in Module 5. Xenophon, *Ways and Means* 4.14–15, for Nicias's thousand mine slaves, Hipponicus's six hundred and Philemonides' three hundred, established in Module 5.

Demosthenes 24.149–151 is the source for the jurors' oath including the undertaking not to permit the cancellation of private debts or the redistribution of lands and houses. That text is a document embedded in the manuscript tradition of the speech; Max Fränkel rejected substantial portions of it as the elaboration of a late interpreter, and most specialists follow him, so the clause cannot be treated as securely classical wording. It is reported here with that warning, and the argument rests instead on the behavioural record, which is not in dispute. The archon's proclamation on entering office that each should hold what he held is separately attested in the *Athenaion Politeia*.

Figures are given with their basis. The liturgical class at three hundred to twelve hundred and the property threshold at three or four talents follow the specialist literature and vary with war; the trierarchy at up to a talent is a modern estimate; the Athenian cavalry at about a thousand is the conventional figure. The number of active politicians in any generation is described only as small, because the reconstructions vary. The fifteen hundred said to have been killed by the Thirty derives from fourth-century orators writing against them and is flagged as rhetorical rather than counted; the murder of Polemarchus and the seizure of the family shield factory rests on Lysias 12, an interested source but a first-hand one. The dating of the syntrierarchy — two men to a ship — to the period after the Sicilian disaster follows the standard accounts and is used as evidence of fiscal strain rather than as a precisely dated reform.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Hansen on the institutional statistics of the democracy and on the small number of habitual speakers; Gabrielsen on the financing of the fleet and on the trierarchy under strain; Fränkel and the subsequent literature on the dikastic oath; Kagan on Thucydides son of Melesias and the organisation of the conservative bloc. The reconstruction of the pre-411 elite's returns from the empire — mining leases, Piraeus traffic, protected overseas property, cleruchy allotments — is assembled from material established in Modules 2, 5 and 6 rather than from any single source that itemises it, and is offered as an argument from the fiscal structure rather than as a documented balance sheet, since no such balance sheet exists. The amnesty of 403 and its terms are standard; the restoration and the reconstitution of the democracy belong to Module 10.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

TO GIVE THE MULTITUDE WHAT WAS THEIR OWN

Module 9 · Plurality or foreclosure — whether Athenian liberty was real or rhetorical; the four losing aristocrats who created it without meaning to; the group that was never let in because nobody ever needed it; and the one afternoon on which the protections failed

The question, and why Athens looks like the exception

The framework asks this of every order and asks it sceptically. There is an apparatus. Do you have any protection from it? Can you speak, petition, assemble, refuse? And if such protections exist, where did they come from — because the man at the bottom did not write them. Protections are made by factions inside the hierarchy, bargaining from a position of strength, at moments when neither they nor the apex want to break the arrangement outright. A faction wants a privilege, an immunity, a check on a rival, and it extracts one. What is left behind afterwards is residue, and residue accretes. So: wherever somebody below the ruling stratum has been let *in*, look for the factional fight that put him there.

Athens appears to be the case that breaks this. Here, on the usual account, the people themselves took power and wrote their own liberties, and the framework's cynicism has nothing to work on.

The Athenian record says otherwise, and it says so in the sources' own words, at each of the four moments that mattered. In every one of them the concession was made by an aristocrat who was losing.

Four openings, four losers

594: a stalemate. Solon was made archon and arbitrator because two factions had fought each other to a standstill and neither could impose a settlement — the propertied who wanted their debts and their dependants, and a countryside that had reached the point of civil war. He was chosen precisely because he belonged to the first by birth and only to the middle of it by wealth.

What came out of it, beyond the *seisachtheia* of Module 2, were three things the poor had not had. The Athenian body was removed from the credit market, so that a man could no longer stake himself. An appeal lay from a magistrate's decision to a

popular court. And — the largest of the three and the least noticed — any Athenian who wished was permitted to prosecute on behalf of a person wronged, not merely the injured party or his kin. That provision, *ho boulomenos*, converts a wrong from a family's business into the city's, and every later Athenian check on officialdom descends from it. The attribution of all three to Solon rests on the *Athenaion Politeia* and is debated; what is not debated is that they were in force by the fifth century.

And Solon states the transaction himself, as Module 2 recorded: he gave the demos as much privilege as sufficed, neither adding to their honour nor taking from it, and contrived that those who held power should suffer nothing unseemly. The concession was the price of civil peace, calculated by a man whose brief was to prevent a war.

508/7: being worsted. This is the cleanest case in the entire corpus and it has already appeared twice in this study, but it belongs here properly.

After the tyranny fell, the aristocrats fell to fighting each other. Herodotus's sentence is six words long in the Greek and it is the whole of the framework's thesis: Cleisthenes, *being worsted*, took the demos into his own party — made the people his *hetaireia*, his club. The *Athenaion Politeia* renders the same event in flatter language: beaten in the clubs, Cleisthenes brought the people over, handing the constitution to the multitude.

What the demos received was not a promise. It was the machinery: a hundred and thirty-nine deme registers in which citizenship was recorded and verified by one's own neighbours; ten new tribes cutting across the old regional blocs; a Council of Five Hundred filled by lot with a quota to every deme; and the word *isonomia*, equality under law, as the name of the thing. It was the largest transfer of political capacity in the ancient record, and it was executed by a man who had lost an aristocratic contest to Isagoras and needed a bigger following than Isagoras could buy.

He was immediately vindicated. Isagoras brought in a Spartan king; the demos besieged the king on the Acropolis for two days and forced him out of Attica. The weapon worked at the first firing, which is why the arrangement was never rolled back.

462/1: while the army was away. The next great opening is the most nakedly factional of the four and turns on a piece of timing that deserves to be stated precisely.

Cimon, son of Miltiades, was the leading man in Athens and his policy was friendship with Sparta. When Sparta asked for help against the helots besieged on Ithome, Cimon carried the vote and marched south with an army composed of the Athenians wealthy enough to own bronze armour. The expedition failed, and the Spartans — suspecting their allies — sent them home. It was a public humiliation of a policy and of the man who owned it.

And while Cimon and that army were in Messenia, Ephialtes moved his reforms in the assembly. The Areopagus, the council of ex-archons sitting for life which had been the last aristocratic institution in the constitution, was stripped of everything but homicide and certain religious jurisdiction; its powers went to the Council, the assembly, and the popular courts. Cimon returned, could not get the measures repealed, and was ostracised. Ephialtes was assassinated within about a year.

Note what the timing means in practice. The measure that broke the aristocracy's last institutional stronghold was carried in an assembly from which several thousand of the wealthiest citizens were physically absent, because they were abroad on campaign at their own expense, on a policy proposed by the man the measure was aimed at. The sources do not say this was planned. They do not have to.

461: beaten in the matter of private possessions. And then the sharpest single piece of evidence in this module, which the *Athenaion Politeia* states without apparent awareness that it is stating anything remarkable.

Pericles was the first to make jury service a paid office, *as a bid for popular favour to counterbalance the wealth of Cimon*. Cimon, the text says, had private possessions on a regal scale; he performed the public services magnificently, and beyond that he maintained a great many of his fellow-demesmen — any member of the deme of Laciadae could come to his house every day and get a reasonable provision; and his estates were guarded by no fences, so that anyone who liked might help himself to the fruit.

Pericles could not afford this. So, on the advice of Damonides of Oea:

since he was getting the worst of it with his private resources, to give the multitude what was their own — and he instituted payment for the jury-courts.

Read that as an origin story. The single institution that made public office genuinely available to a poor Athenian — a wage for the day he spent sitting in judgement, without which he could not have afforded to sit at all, and which underwrote the entire court system that then policed every magistrate in the city — was invented as a counter-move in a contest between two rich men about which of them was more generous. Nobody in the story is thinking about the poor man's access to office. They are thinking about Cimon's unfenced orchard.

Four openings. A stalemate, a defeat, an absent army, and a man who could not outspend his rival. Between them they produced the most extensive body of popular political liberty in the ancient world, and not one of them was undertaken for that purpose.

The same instrument closed the door

The framework's law cuts both ways, and Athens shows the cut within the same decade and by the same hand.

In 451/0 Pericles carried a law confining Athenian citizenship to those with an Athenian mother as well as an Athenian father. Previously descent in the male line had been enough.

The motives are genuinely unknown — no ancient source supplies the background, and it is not even certain whether the law was retroactive. The proposals on offer include: a low-level weapon against Cimon, whose mother was Thracian; a strike at the aristocratic practice of contracting marriage-alliances with leading families in other cities, which created loyalties across borders, as Humphreys argued; a restriction on the number of people sharing in office, jury pay and public distributions; and simple popular sentiment against foreigners, which the upper classes did not share and the lower classes may have. Plutarch's report that a later grain distribution found some fourteen thousand qualified and struck off nearly five thousand is a late figure of uncertain application and should not be leaned on.

What matters here is structural rather than motivational. **The same mechanism that widened participation narrowed membership**, in the same decade, by the same man, in pursuit of the same kind of advantage. The residue of factional conflict is not a moral accumulation trending toward inclusion. It is whatever happened to be left behind by fights whose participants wanted something else entirely, and it points in whichever direction the fight happened to run.

The group that was never let in

Which brings the framework's test to its sharpest form. If the law is right — if people get let in when a faction needs them — then the group that never got in should be the group nobody ever needed.

The metics fit exactly. They were numerous. Many were rich. They paid a tax on their persons, and a market tax on top of it, and the war levy if they were wealthy, and funded choruses. They served as hoplites. They rowed in the fleet, including at Arginusae. They produced a large share of the intellectual life of the city and wrote its finest court speeches. Some families had been in Attica for generations. And they were permanently, hereditarily excluded from the register, from the assembly, from the juries, from office, from land, and from the mining concessions.

Why? Not because Athens despised them; the honorific decrees and the tombstones say otherwise, and Athens went out of its way to keep them coming, as Module 5

established. They were excluded because **no Athenian faction ever needed them.** The citizen body was already large enough that any internal contest could be won inside it. Cleisthenes did not have to reach past the register to beat Isagoras. Pericles did not have to reach past it to beat Cimon. There was never a losing aristocrat whose arithmetic required metic votes, so there was never a proposal to give them any, and the question does not appear to have been raised.

And the control case is built into the record. The one moment when Athenian need became absolute, the door opened at once. At Arginusae in 406, with the citizen body exhausted and the last fleet being scraped together, slaves were put on the benches — and freed for it. Two centuries of metic taxes, service and residence bought nothing. One afternoon of genuine scarcity bought manumission.

Enfranchisement follows need. It does not follow desert, and it does not follow service. That is uncomfortable and it is what the evidence says.

Were the protections real?

Now the other half of the question, because origins do not settle worth. A liberty extracted for cynical reasons can still be a liberty. Was there in fact protection from the apparatus?

There was, and by any ancient standard it was extraordinary.

Speech. The herald opened every assembly by asking who wished to speak, and the question was not rhetorical. The Athenians had two words for it — *isēgoria*, the equal right to address the assembly, and *parrhēsia*, the licence to say the unwelcome thing. Herodotus attributed the city's rise to the first: equality, he says, is a good thing, and the proof is that under tyrants the Athenians were no better in war than their neighbours, but once rid of them they were far the first of all — for while they were oppressed they were as men working for a master, and when freed each was eager to achieve for himself. And Module 7 supplied the practical demonstration: a citizen could put the most powerful man in Athens on stage by name, as a bullying slave, at a state festival, and win first prize.

The body. A citizen could not be tortured. He could not be imprisoned without process — the councillors' oath, as Demosthenes reports it, bound them not to imprison any Athenian who provided three sureties from his own tax bracket, with narrow exceptions for treason and tax default. And an oath of the people and the Council, cited in the Andocidean corpus, undertook not to exile, imprison, or execute anyone without a trial.

Property. Never redistributed, as Module 8 established, in two centuries.

Petition and assembly. The assembly met roughly forty times a year. Any citizen could attend, speak, and move an amendment. There were standing procedures for impeaching officials and for laying complaints before the assembly itself.

Accountability. Every magistrate was scrutinised before taking office and audited on leaving it. No exceptions and no immunities.

Review of the sovereign. And the most sophisticated of them: the *graphe paranomon*, by which any citizen could indict the proposer of a decree on the ground that it was unlawful, suspending the decree until the case was heard. Its origin is placed in the later fifth century and its first securely attested use falls around 415. It is a check on the assembly itself, exercisable by one man against the sovereign body, and it was used a great deal.

And the crucial structural feature: **who enforced all this.** Not a superior court, not a crown, not a church, not a foreign guarantor. Six thousand jurors, empanelled annually, drawn by lot, paid three obols, deciding in panels of hundreds, with no appeal from their verdict. The protections were enforced by the people they protected, sitting in judgement, being paid to do it out of public funds by a law Pericles had passed because he could not outspend Cimon.

That is why they bit. A right whose enforcement depends on the goodwill of the body it constrains is a wish. A right enforced by several hundred randomly chosen men who owe their day's wage to the arrangement and cannot be overruled is an instrument.

And the afternoon they failed

In 406 the Athenian fleet won at Arginusae and then, in a rising storm, failed to recover the crews of its own disabled ships. A thousand or two thousand men drowned. The city went into a grief that turned very quickly into rage.

Callixenus moved that the generals be heard and then voted on together, in a single vote, on their collective guilt. This was contrary to the decree of Cannonus, which required that a man accused of harming the Athenian people be tried separately. Some in the assembly said so. The presiding officers of the day — and Socrates was among them, though the sources differ over whether he was one of the fifty prytaneis or the chairman himself — refused to put the motion.

Xenophon records what happened next, and it is the most important sentence in this module:

Some of the people applauded this act, but the greater number cried out that it was monstrous if the people were to be prevented from doing whatever they wished.

And when Lyciscus moved that the objectors be judged by the very same vote as the generals, the shouting was such that the objections were withdrawn. Euryptolemus

made a long and legally exact speech for separate trials; a formal objection was raised against his motion; a second vote defeated it. The generals were condemned together and the six present were executed.

Not long afterwards, Xenophon adds, the Athenians repented, and voted that complaints be laid against those who had deceived the people, and that sureties be found for them until they came to trial, and that Callixenus be among them. Callixenus fled.

Seven years earlier the same city had put down an oligarchic coup. Seven years later it would execute Socrates for impiety. And in 406 it killed six of its own admirals after a victory, in defiance of its own law, because it could not bear to be told that there was something it might not do.

Reading Athenian liberty against the framework

One. The law holds, and Athens states it in the sources' own words. Not one of the four openings came from below. A stalemate that needed an arbitrator; an aristocrat *being worsted*; a reform carried while the opposing faction's army was out of the country; and a politician *beaten in the matter of private possessions* who was advised to give the multitude what was their own. Four men in factional difficulty, four concessions, and between them the most extensive popular liberty in the ancient world — none of it intended, and the intention is not required for the result.

Two, and this is the module's contribution: the *form* of the residue determines whether it survives, and Athens took a form the rest of the corpus mostly did not. In most cases the residue of a factional bargain is a *substantive protection* — a charter, a privilege, an immunity, a guarantee against the apparatus. Such residue is revocable in principle and repeatedly revoked in practice, because the granting power keeps the power to withdraw it and generally does so once the faction that extracted it has declined.

The Athenian concessions took the other form. Cleisthenes did not grant the demos a right; he made the demos into the Council and the assembly. Ephialtes did not protect the demos from the Areopagus; he moved the Areopagus's jurisdiction into courts the demos staffed. Pericles did not promise the poor access to office; he paid them to occupy it. Each concession was a transfer of a share in the deciding power rather than a promise made by it.

That changes the physics entirely. **A liberty granted as a substantive protection can be withdrawn by the granting power. A liberty granted as a share of the granting power cannot, because withdrawing it requires the consent of the people who now hold it.** This is why Athenian liberty absorbed two oligarchic coups and

came back inside a year on both occasions, and why ending it in the end required a foreign army and a permanent garrison in the Piraeus.

The corpus can use this as a discriminator immediately, and should. Sort every accreted liberty in every case study into *protection* or *participation*, and predict durability accordingly. The barons' charter is protection: suspended, reissued, annulled by a pope, ignored for centuries. The Commons' grip on supply is participation: never quite reversed, because reversing it required the assent of the men who held it. The framework has been treating both as residue of the same kind. They are residues of different kinds, and only one of them compounds.

Three, and this answers the question of what makes a liberty more than words on paper: it needs an enforcer with an independent interest and the standing to act. At Athens the enforcer was six thousand paid jurors whose own position depended on the arrangement and whose verdicts nobody could overturn. That is why an Athenian's protections were not decorative — a magistrate who abused one faced a body that had no reason to protect him and every reason to convict.

But the same fact generates the failure mode exactly. Because the enforcer *was* the sovereign, there was no appeal against the sovereign. In 406 the only thing standing between a grieving crowd and six executions was one man declining to put a motion — the day-chairman from Module 4, holding the office by lot for a night and a day — and the crowd's answer was that it was monstrous for the people to be prevented from doing whatever they wished.

So: **a liberty enforced by its beneficiaries is strong against everyone except its beneficiaries.** Where the corpus has looked for external guarantors of a right — a church, a crown, a rival power, a distant metropolitan court, a foreign patron — Athens shows what happens when there are none at all. Near-perfect protection against officials, functionaries, generals and the rich; and none whatever against the assembled majority in a bad week. The cases where colonial subjects successfully invoked metropolitan law against a local administration are the mirror image of Arginusae: there, the guarantor was distant and indifferent and therefore occasionally useful; here, the guarantor was present and interested and therefore useless against itself.

Four, the honest closing. Was there liberty at Athens, or was it rhetoric?

There was liberty, on a scale with almost no ancient parallel, and it was real in the only sense that finally matters: a man with no property could speak in the sovereign assembly, move an amendment to a decree, sit in judgement on a general, indict the proposer of a law, refuse to be imprisoned without sureties, keep his body out of the courts' hands, and be paid for the day he spent doing any of it. None of that was

available to a poor man anywhere else in the Mediterranean, and most of it would not be available to one again for two thousand years.

And every piece of it, so far as this module could trace, was the by-product of a quarrel among rich men about which of them would lead.

Both are true and the second does not diminish the first. What it does is tell a reader where to look. Not at the people who ended up with the liberty, and not at the moral arguments made for it afterwards — those come later and are written by the beneficiaries. Look instead at the man who was losing, and at what he needed that only they could give him. At Athens he needed a following larger than his rival's, at a moment when his rival had a Spartan army or an unfenced orchard. What he paid for it was a share in deciding, and having paid it he could not take it back.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. *Athenaion Politeia* 27.3–4 is the centrepiece and is quoted from Kenyon's and Rackham's public-domain translations, which agree in substance: Pericles instituted jury pay as a bid for popular favour to counterbalance Cimon's wealth; Cimon's possessions were on a regal scale, any Laciad might come daily for a provision, his estates were unfenced; and Pericles, beaten in the matter of private possessions, took Damonides' advice to give the multitude what was their own. Plutarch, *Pericles* 9.2–3, corroborates and adds that Pericles then used the multitude against the Areopagus. *Athenaion Politeia* 9 for the Solonian provisions — appeal to the popular court and the right of any Athenian who wished to prosecute on behalf of a wronged party — with the attribution to Solon noted as debated; *Ath. Pol.* 20.1 and 25.1–2 for Cleisthenes and for Ephialtes; Solon fragments 5 and 34 West were quoted in Module 2 and are referred to here. Herodotus 5.66.2 for Cleisthenes, being worsted, taking the demos into his party; 5.72 for the siege of Cleomenes on the Acropolis; 5.78 for the passage on equality, quoted here in the public-domain rendering on Perseus. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.7, for the Arginusae trial: the motion of Callixenus, the decree of Cannonus requiring separate trials, the refusal to put the motion, the cry that it was monstrous if the people were to be prevented from doing whatever they wished, the threat by Lyciscus, Euryptolemus' speech, the condemnation, and the subsequent repentance and the complaints laid against those who had deceived the people, Callixenus among them. Demosthenes 24.144 for the councillors' oath not to imprison an Athenian who provides three sureties in the same tax bracket, with its exceptions; the Andocidean passage on the oath of the people and Council not to exile, imprison, or execute without trial is cited as reported in the specialist literature.

Disputes are flagged rather than resolved. The Solonian attribution of *ephesis* and *ho boulomenos* rests on the *Athenaion Politeia* and is contested; what is not contested is that both were in force in the fifth century. The precise content of Ephialtes' reform is uncertain — the sources disagree over whether Ephialtes, Themistocles or Pericles was responsible, and the *Athenaion Politeia* attributes it variously — and the reconstruction given here, that the measure passed while Cimon and the hoplite levy were in Messenia, is the generally accepted view and is identified as such. Socrates' exact role in 406 is reported differently by Plato's *Apology* and Xenophon's *Hellenica* (one of the prytaneis) and by the *Gorgias* and *Memorabilia* (chairman), and the discrepancy is stated in the text. The motives for the citizenship law of 451/0 are given as a range because no ancient source supplies any background: an attack on Cimon's foreign parentage, Humphreys' argument about aristocratic cross-border marriage alliances, restriction of access to distributions, and popular sentiment are all reported as proposals rather than findings, and it is not known whether the law was retroactive. Plutarch's figures from the later grain distribution — roughly fourteen thousand qualified and just under five thousand struck off — are late, of disputed application, and are not relied on. The origin date of the *graphe paranomon* is given as the later fifth century with first secure attestation around 415, following Carawan and the standard literature.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Badian on Cimon's disgrace at Ithome and its political consequences; Carawan on the Arginusae trial and the emergence of judicial review; Humphreys on the citizenship law and marriage alliances; Ostwald and Hansen on the development of popular sovereignty and the institutions of the restored democracy; Rhodes throughout on the *Athenaion Politeia*. The freeing of slaves who rowed at Arginusae is standard and is used here for its structural bearing on enfranchisement rather than for its details, which are thin. The metic condition was established in Module 5 and the citizenship register in Module 2; the coups of 411 and 404 belong to Module 8 and their aftermath to Module 10.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

ADD AN OBOL TO THE SAILORS' PAY

Module 10 · Change and collapse — the largest slave population in Greece and the most capable poor citizenry in the ancient world, neither of which ever changed anything; the sixth of a drachma that cost Athens the Aegean; and the Macedonian officer who ended the democracy with a property line

The law, and why Athens is its hardest test

The claim this module tests is that structural change never originates below. A durable order is an armed settlement, alterable only by those who command organised force, and the man at the bottom commands none; a rising against an intact floor is crushed with a regularity that approaches a law. Change comes when the floor itself cracks, and it cracks in four ways. The elite *fractures* and one faction arms the people against the other. The elite *exhausts* itself in great-power war and must pay the survivors. The elite is *conquered* by a rival elite and remade at spear-point. Or the elite *overbreeds*, seating fewer claimants than it produces, until its surplus turns against it and leads the crowd as fuel. The common man is present at every opening, as soldier and as crowd and as the weight one broken faction swings — but never as its author.

Athens is the best available test of that proposition and the fairest, because if it is ever going to fail, it should fail here.

Athens held the largest servile population in the Greek world outside Laconia — somewhere between fifty and a hundred thousand people, in a territory of two and a half thousand square kilometres, worked in ones and twos in households and in tens of thousands in the mines. And Athens possessed the most politically capable poor population in the ancient record: men who were armed, paid, formed by two centuries of office-holding, organised into demes and tribes and crews, and formally sovereign. They voted the wars. They sat in judgement on the generals. They had, in the fleet, physical possession of the state's decisive instrument.

If popular capacity has ever anywhere been sufficient to generate structural change by itself, this is where the evidence should be.

What never happened

There was never a slave revolt at Athens. Not once, in two hundred years, at any scale.

The single mass action in the record is the desertion after Decelea in 413, when more than twenty thousand slaves walked out toward a fortified Peloponnesian position fourteen miles from the city. That is an enormous number — larger than the citizen body of most Greek states — and it is not a revolt. Nobody attacked anything. There was no leader, no programme, no organisation any source detected, and no attempt whatever to take or hold anything. They walked out of a door a foreign army had opened, and Module 5 gave the likely destination: many were sold on by the people they walked to.

Sparta, with a servile population that *was* a conquered people on its own land, speaking one language and remembering one conquest, faced repeated helot risings and organised its entire society around the expectation of another. Athens, with more slaves and worse conditions in the mines, faced none — for the reason Module 5 established, which is that its slaves had been bought from a dozen nations and dispersed among thousands of owners. Atomisation was the security, and the security held absolutely.

And there was never a thetic rising. The Athenian poor, who had every instrument the ancient world could supply a poor man — the vote, the wage, the jury, the register, the ship — never once initiated a structural change. Every occasion on which the demos acted decisively, and there are three, has the same shape, and the shape is examined below.

The four cracks, run against the record

Fracture. Twice, and both were examined in earlier modules. In 508/7 Cleisthenes, *being worsted* in an aristocratic contest, took the demos into his own faction and armed it against Isagoras. The demos then besieged a Spartan king on the Acropolis. That is the first crack exactly: the crowd did not prise the door open, it was handed through from inside. And in 411, as Module 8 established, the propertied class — *who also suffered most severely from the war* — took Persian money and abolished the constitution, with the assembly's own consent.

Overbreeding. This is the crack Athens tests most interestingly, because Athens had built a machine against it.

The lot, the annual tenure, the two-terms-in-a-lifetime cap on the Council, and the several hundred magistracies recycled every year constitute, in effect, an anti-overproduction device: a constitution that seats an enormous number of claimants in

rotation and therefore cannot accumulate a large body of men who expected office and did not get it. Almost nothing else in the corpus has such a device.

And the surplus appeared anyway, in the one channel the lot could not reach. Module 4 identified it: the offices could be allotted, but the ability to move six thousand men could not, and it was taught privately at sophists' fees. So the late fifth century produced a cohort of young aristocrats trained at great expense in the one skill that still bought power, in a city where every other route had been levelled — Alcibiades, Critias, Charmides, and the wider circle around Socrates that the Athenians would remember bitterly at his trial.

That is a counter-elite by any definition. And here is the finding that Athens contributes: **it did not lead a revolution. It led an oligarchy.** Critias, aristocrat, poet, tragedian, associate of Socrates and cousin of Plato's mother, became the most violent member of the Thirty. The surplus of educated, ambitious, frustrated men went not toward widening the settlement but toward abolishing it.

The reason is structural and it matters for the framework. **The counter-elite forms against whatever is incumbent, and its programme is determined by what the incumbent is, not by any inherent direction of its own.** Where the incumbent is an *ancien régime*, the surplus elite is levelling, and the canonical examples — the provincial advocate, the noble's radicalised son — make the counter-elite look inherently democratic. Athens is the control case. Here the demos was the incumbent, and the frustrated surplus went the other way. Critias is the Athenian Robespierre, and he ran the terror against the democrats.

Exhaustion. The main event, and it has an exact mechanism, set out in the next section.

Conquest. Four times: the Spartan army that removed Hippias in 510; the Spartan settlement that imposed the Thirty in 404; the Spartan settlement that removed them in 403; and the Macedonian settlement that ended the democracy in 322.

The obol

Athens was not defeated in battle. That is the fact from which everything else in this module follows, and it is routinely obscured by the shape of the narrative.

After the Sicilian catastrophe of 413, Athens rebuilt. It won at Cynossema, at Abydos, at Cyzicus in 410 — where the Spartan dispatch reporting the defeat said the ships were lost, the men were starving, and nobody knew what to do. It won at Arginusae in 406, the largest all-Greek naval battle ever fought. Sparta twice offered peace and Athens twice refused. Militarily, on the water, Athens remained the better fleet almost to the end.

What Athens could not do was pay.

In 407 Sparta sent Lysander east as admiral, and Lysander went inland to Sardis to see Cyrus the Younger, the King's son newly installed over the western satrapies. Xenophon records the negotiation, and its logic is stated with complete candour by the Spartan ambassadors. They asked Cyrus to fix the sailors' wage at an Attic drachma a day — and they explained why: *if this were made the rate, the sailors of the Athenian fleet would desert their ships, and hence he would spend less money.*

Cyrus refused, on the ground that he could not exceed the King's instructions; the compact specified thirty minae a month per ship. Lysander let it drop. Then, after dinner, Cyrus drank his health and asked by what act he could gratify him most.

By adding an obol to the pay of each sailor.

From that day the wage was four obols where it had been three. Plutarch, drawing on the tradition, says the effect was that Lysander all but emptied the enemy's ships, for their sailors deserted in crowds to the best paymaster, and those who stayed were mutinous.

One obol. A sixth of a drachma, granted at a dinner party in Sardis, as a personal favour, by a Persian prince to a Spartan courtier who had asked for nothing else.

Now set that against what Athens was doing in the same years. The thousand-talent reserve, protected since 431 by a standing death penalty for even proposing to touch it, had been opened. The tribute had been abolished and replaced with a harbour tax in the hope of raising more. In 407/6 the golden statues of Victory on the Acropolis were melted down for an emergency coinage. At Arginusae in 406, slaves were put on the benches and freed for it. A state melting its dedications and manumitting its own property to find crews cannot raise the wage by an obol.

So the arm that Module 1 described — the mobilisation rather than the apparatus, the hundred and seventy oars that had to be found and paid and exercised every single spring — turned out to be, at the last, a labour market. And a labour market can be entered by anyone with money. Persia had money.

The end followed with a kind of logical inevitability. At Aegospotami in 405 Lysander caught the Athenian fleet drawn up on an open beach in the Hellespont with the crews dispersed ashore foraging, because there was no market there to supply them, and took almost the whole of it without a fight. The emblem is exact: the arm failed not in action but because it could not be kept assembled.

With the Hellespont closed, the grain stopped. Athens starved through the winter and surrendered in the spring of 404. The terms were the long walls and the Piraeus fortifications demolished, all ships surrendered but twelve, the exiles recalled, and the same friends and enemies as Sparta. Xenophon, who was there:

After this Lysander sailed into Piraeus, the exiles returned, and the Peloponnesians with great enthusiasm began to tear down the walls to the music of flute-girls, thinking that that day was the beginning of freedom for Greece.

The imposed change, and an old move repeated

Lysander installed thirty men to govern, put a Spartan garrison on the Acropolis under a harmost named Callibius, and left.

The Thirty restricted the citizen body to Three Thousand and then did the thing that this study has seen once before. The *Athenaion Politeia* records it in a single clause: when their force sent against Thrasybulus at Phyle met a reverse, *the Thirty decided to disarm the bulk of the population and to get rid of Theramenes*.

Two centuries earlier Peisistratus had needed mercenaries bought with Thracian silver, hostages held on an island, and an elaborate staged assembly to get the weapons out of Athenian houses. The Thirty needed none of that, because there was a Spartan garrison on the rock. But the requirement was identical, and its recurrence is the most economical demonstration in the study of what an Athenian regime not resting on the demos actually needed: **the first act of any government of Athens that was not the demos's own was to take the arms out of the houses.**

What followed was what Module 8 predicted of a settlement drawn small with no revenue coming in. The Thirty killed for money — the traditional figure of fifteen hundred comes from fourth-century orators writing against them and should be read as rhetoric, not arithmetic — and they went after wealthy metics explicitly, seizing the shield factory of Lysias's family and killing his brother Polemarchus. Theramenes, who objected, was executed by his colleagues.

Who actually restored the democracy

Now the episode that most looks like a popular victory, and the reason it is not one.

In the winter of 404/3 Thrasybulus crossed from Thebes with about seventy men and seized the fort of Phyle in the hills above Athens during a snowstorm. His numbers grew to several hundred and then to a thousand. He beat the Thirty's force at Phyle, marched on the Piraeus, and at Munychia defeated the oligarchic army and killed Critias in the fighting.

That was real, and the men who did it deserve their reputation. The Roman-era Pausanias thought Thrasybulus the greatest of all Athenians.

But it is not what restored the democracy. What followed the death of Critias is this. The Three Thousand deposed the surviving Thirty and replaced them with a board of

Ten; the Thirty withdrew to Eleusis; and *both* oligarchic bodies then appealed to Sparta. Lysander obtained permission to raise a force, arrived with mercenaries and money, blockaded the Piraeus, and was in a fair way to crushing the democrats altogether.

And then King Pausanias of Sparta — on the ancient accounts jealous of Lysander's power and reputation, and part of a broader Spartan unease at what Lysander's system of decarchies and garrisons was building — brought out a second Spartan army, superseded him, fought the democrats at the Piraeus and beat them, and then negotiated a settlement that restored the democracy. The Spartan assembly heard both Athenian sides and sent fifteen commissioners to work with Pausanias on a reconciliation. Everyone was to go home except the Thirty, the Eleven and the Ten of the Piraeus, who might settle at Eleusis. The exiles returned. The amnesty was sworn.

So the restoration of Athenian democracy in 403 was decided by a quarrel between a Spartan king and a Spartan admiral, adjudicated at Sparta by a Spartan assembly and executed by Spartan commissioners.

That is the framework's third crack operating at one remove, and it generalises into something the corpus should hold onto: **where an order is under external control, its internal constitutional changes are determined by factional fights inside the controlling hierarchy, and the local population's role is to supply the pretext, the auxiliary force, and the appearance of agency.** Thrasybulus's seventy men were necessary — without them there was nothing for Pausanias to settle — and they were not sufficient, and they were not decisive. The decisive vote was cast eighty miles away by men who had never been democrats and never became any.

The actual end

The democracy lived another eighty years, and its ending is the cleanest case of conquest in the study.

At Chaeronea in 338 Philip beat the Greek allies and left the Athenian constitution alone. In 335 Alexander destroyed Thebes, and Athens — as Module 4 noted — built the *ephebeia*, its first and only state formation apparatus, at exactly the point when its institutions had stopped governing anything that mattered. In 323 Alexander died and Athens voted for war, equipping two hundred triremes and calling up every man under forty.

And here the whole arc of this study closes on a single detail from the naval campaign of 322. At Amorgos, where the Athenian fleet was destroyed, **Athens had more ships than Macedonia and could not find crews for them all.** The manning requirement that had made everything possible in 480 — the arm no property

qualification could restrict, the account that had to be settled every spring, the veto that broke the Four Hundred — failed at the end in exactly the terms in which it had begun. There were hulls and no men.

Antipater and Craterus beat the Greek coalition on land at Crannon on 5 September 322. The terms Antipater imposed on Athens were these: a Macedonian garrison in the fortress of Munychia, overlooking the Piraeus; the costs of the war; the surrender of Samos; the surrender of the anti-Macedonian orators, of whom Demosthenes took poison at Calauria to avoid capture and Hyperides was killed; and a property qualification for citizenship set at two thousand drachmas. Diodorus reports that more than twelve thousand Athenians of some twenty-one thousand were struck off the rolls; the figures are his and should be treated as an order of magnitude. Five years later Cassander lowered the bar to a thousand drachmas and installed Demetrius of Phalerum to govern.

That is the end of the Athenian democracy. Not a coup, not a revolt, not an internal repricing, and not a decision by any Athenian. A Macedonian officer with a garrison in the harbour drew a line at two thousand drachmas, and more than half the Athenian people were on the wrong side of it.

Reading Athenian change against the framework

One. The law holds, and it holds in the hardest case available. Two centuries; the largest servile population in the Greek world; the most politically capable poor citizenry in the ancient record; every instrument of participation that antiquity could supply; and not one structural change originating from below. Every change traces to fracture, to exhaustion, or to conquest. The slaves never rose and walked out only when a foreign army opened a door. The thetes never rose at all.

Two, and this is the module's contribution to the framework's account of change. Popular action at Athens is uniformly *restorative* and never *constructive*, and the two are constantly confused because they look identical while they are happening. Take the three occasions on which the Athenian demos acted decisively and look at what each produced. In 508 it besieged a Spartan king on the Acropolis — defending an arrangement Cleisthenes had made weeks earlier. In 411 the fleet at Samos refused the oligarchy, deposed its officers and swore to maintain the democracy — restoring a constitution that already existed. In 403 the men of the Piraeus fought to bring back what the Thirty had taken. Three magnificent popular actions, and not one of them produced an arrangement that had not already been made by someone above them.

This sharpens the framework's honest concession in Part VIII rather than contradicting it. The pressure from below is real and it is a genuine cause; the weight on the lever is not nothing. But the Athenian evidence suggests the capacity is specifically *defensive*: the common man can hold an arrangement, restore an arrangement, and make the cost of withdrawing an arrangement prohibitive — and this is a great deal, and it is why liberties once granted as participation are so hard to withdraw, as Module 9 argued. What he does not do, anywhere in this record, is design one. **The proposition to test across the corpus is that popular action never yields a novel arrangement, only the reinstatement or defence of an existing one — and that every apparent counter-example will turn out, on inspection, to have a counter-elite supplying the design.**

Three. The counter-elite's programme is set by the incumbent, not by any direction of its own. Athens built a constitutional machine against elite overproduction — the lot, the annual tenure, the lifetime cap — and produced a surplus anyway, in the only channel the lot could not reach. And that surplus went oligarchic, because the demos held the seats. The framework's canonical examples of the frustrated surplus are all counter-elites against *anciens régimes*, which makes elite overproduction look like an engine of widening. Athens shows it is not an engine of anything in particular. It is an engine of opposition, and the direction is supplied by whoever is currently seated.

Four, and this is where the whole study closes. Where the floor is a mobilisation rather than an apparatus, exhaustion is fiscal before it is military, and the decisive indicator is the wage. Module 1 established the distinction: an apparatus is a standing body whose composition its holders choose, while a mobilisation is the population itself, temporarily under arms, whose composition the weapon dictates. Module 6 showed the allies converting their own naval obligations into cash and thereby transferring the capability to Athens. Module 8 showed the mobilised arm holding a veto over constitutional change because it was separately paid and physically elsewhere.

All of that has one implication, and 407 is where it arrives. **An arm that must be hired every year can be outbid.** Athens did not lose command of the sea because it lost battles; it kept winning them. It lost command of the sea because a Persian prince, asked at dinner what would gratify a Spartan admiral most, granted a sixth of a drachma per man per day, and the crews began walking across. There is no strategic answer to that, and no amount of seamanship compensates for it, and the Athenians — who understood their own system better than anyone — could see exactly what was

happening and could not raise their own bid, because the Aegean revenue that had paid the wage was the thing the war was being fought over.

An apparatus can be starved and will often keep standing for years out of habit, discipline and lack of alternatives. A mobilisation dissolves the week the wage is better elsewhere. **So the collapse indicator for an order of the Athenian type is not the loss of a battle, a province, or a fleet. It is the moment a rival can pay the men more.**

And the discipline that closes the module. Nothing here diminishes what the men at Phyle and at Samos and on the Acropolis in 508 actually did; they fought, and some of them died, and the arrangements they defended were worth defending and would not have survived without them. The finding is narrower and harder. It is that in two hundred years, in the freest and best-armed population in the ancient world, the direction of change was set every single time by somebody above them — by a losing aristocrat, by a bankrupt liturgical class, by a Spartan king with a grudge against a Spartan admiral, and at the last by a Macedonian regent with a garrison in the harbour and a figure in drachmas.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts. Xenophon, *Hellenica*, is quoted in Dakyns's and Brownson's public-domain translations: 1.5.4–7 for the Spartan ambassadors' request that the wage be set at a drachma so that the sailors of the Athenian fleet would desert their ships, for Cyrus's refusal on the ground of the King's instructions, and for Lysander's request after dinner that an obol be added to each sailor's pay, after which the wage was four obols where it had been three; 2.2.23 for the demolition of the walls to the music of flute-girls in the belief that the day was the beginning of freedom for Greece; 2.2.20–22 for the terms of surrender; 2.4 for Thrasybulus's seventy men at Phyle, the fighting at Munychia and the Piraeus, and Pausanias's settlement. *Athenaion Politeia* 37 for the decision of the Thirty to disarm the bulk of the population and dispose of Theramenes, and 34–40 generally for the regime of the Thirty and the restoration. Plutarch, *Lysander* 4, for Cyrus's grant of ten thousand darics and for the report that Athenian sailors deserted in crowds to the best paymaster, and *Lysander* 15 for the destruction of the walls and ships to the flute; Plutarch is writing five centuries later and is used for corroboration rather than as an independent witness. Thucydides 7.27.5 for the twenty thousand deserting slaves, established in Module 5. Diodorus 18.18 for the terms imposed by Antipater in 322 and for the figures of those disenfranchised.

Figures are given with their basis and their uncertainty. Slave numbers in Attica are given as fifty to a hundred thousand, the range of the modern estimates, since the ancient figures are unusable. The fifteen hundred said to have been killed by the Thirty derives from fourth-century orators writing to condemn them and is identified as rhetorical. Diodorus's figures for 322 — more than twelve thousand disenfranchised of some twenty-one thousand — are his alone, and are given as an order of magnitude; the property qualification is two thousand drachmas under Antipater in 322 and a thousand under Cassander from 317, and the two should not be conflated. Thrasybulus's seventy men is Xenophon's figure. The account of Athenian naval victories after 413 — Cynossema, Abydos, Cyzicus, Arginusae — and of the Spartan peace offers rests on Xenophon and Diodorus and is standard.

Disputes are flagged. Pausanias's motive in 403 is given as the ancient tradition reports it, namely jealousy of Lysander, with the broader Spartan unease at Lysander's decarchies noted as the modern gloss; the sources are hostile to Lysander and the motive cannot be verified. The characterisation of Critias rests on Xenophon and on the Platonic tradition, both hostile and both interested, and the identification of the Socratic circle as a counter-elite is offered as this module's reading rather than as a datum. The claim that Athens had more ships than crews at Amorgos in 322 follows the standard reconstruction of that campaign. Whether the *ephebeia* of 335/4 was a creation or a reorganisation was flagged as unresolved in Module 4 and the argument here is conditional on the later dating.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Skocpol on state breakdown and the crowd walking into a gap opened from above; Goldstone and Turchin on elite overproduction and the counter-elite; Acemoglu and Robinson on the franchise as a credible commitment, which bears on Module 9's Cleisthenes and is referred to here rather than re-argued; Cartledge on the Phyle campaign and on Spartan politics in 403; Bosworth and the specialist literature on the Lamian War. The framework paper *Elite Chaos* supplies the four cracks against which this module was constructed, and the three refinements offered in the closing section are addressed to it.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

A PINT OF BARLEY MEAL, HALF A PINT OF WATER

Module 11 · The grim accounting — the sword ledger and the metabolic one; a population carried above its land's capacity by other people's soil and other people's bodies; the note called twice, both times by the order's own war plan; and why the forgetting was so complete

Two ledgers

An armed group took Attica, held it, ran it for a long time, and stopped. The accounting has two columns and they are not the same column.

The first is the **sword**: the violence that made the arrangement, the violence that maintained it, and the violence of its ending. This is the ledger most histories keep, badly, in the form of battle casualties.

The second is the **metabolic**, and it applies only where it applies. Coordination — irrigation, intensive agriculture, long-distance trade, an administrative state — can lift a population above what its land would otherwise carry. When the coordination breaks, the difference does not simply stop growing; it is called in, and the debt is settled in famine and epidemic. A conquest or a revolution can therefore kill vastly more people than its armies do, and kill them by mechanisms no soldier is present for.

And there is the framing observation that makes the accounting necessary at all: given enough time, the violence disappears. The arrangement becomes the way the world is, and nobody remembers that it was made. Athens is an extreme case of that disappearance, and the last section of this module argues that the disappearance was not accidental.

The metabolic position

Attica could not feed its own people, and this was true before the empire, during it, and afterwards.

The Landscape established the physical constraint: perhaps a third to two fifths of the peninsula cultivable at the outside, biennial fallow halving the cereal area in any year, and a wheat crop that fails something like four years in ten on Garnsey's comparative reckoning. The classical population of Attica — citizens, women and children, metics, and slaves — is usually put at somewhere between two hundred and

fifty and three hundred thousand at its height, on estimates that are contested at every point.

The gap between what that land grew and what those people ate is the central metabolic fact of the case, and the size of it is genuinely disputed. Demosthenes told an Athenian jury that the Bosporan kingdom sent Athens four hundred thousand *medimnoi* of wheat a year, an amount equal to all other sources put together — implying a total import of around eight hundred thousand, something on the order of twenty-six thousand tonnes. Alfonso Moreno takes roughly that figure as the structural annual shortfall. Peter Garnsey, in the standard work on ancient food crisis, is far more sceptical: Demosthenes was a politician with a case to make, the four hundred thousand may represent a single bad year rather than a normal one, and no firm figure can be safely derived from the passage.

The dispute is about the magnitude, not the fact. Nobody argues that Attica fed itself.

What filled the gap is the finding, and it reorganises three earlier modules. In the fifth century, on Moreno's reconstruction, the imports came chiefly from the surplus of Athenian holdings overseas — the cleruchic estates, and Euboea above all. In the fourth, after the empire had gone, they came from the Pontic steppe. Either way, the purchase was funded substantially by silver, and the silver was dug at Laurium by twenty to thirty thousand purchased foreigners, and the whole of it arrived along sea routes that only the fleet kept open.

So the chain that carried the Athenian population above its land's capacity ran: **other people's soil, worked in some cases by the people it had been taken from; bought by silver; dug by bought human beings; delivered by a navy.** Four links, every one of them coordination-dependent, and one of them consisting of people.

That is what Module 2's cleruchies actually were. They were not primarily an income stream for absentee rentiers, though they were that too. They were, in the fifth century, the food supply. And it is what Module 6's tribute was for: the tribute bought the fleet, and the fleet kept open the road the grain came down.

The note called, twice

The striking thing about the Athenian metabolic debt is that it was called in twice, and on both occasions the immediate cause was not an enemy but the coordination's own strategy.

430–426: the plague

Pericles' war plan was to abandon Attica. The entire rural population of a peninsula of two and a half thousand square kilometres was to move inside the walls of the city and the Piraeus, let the Peloponnesians burn the olives and the vines, and live off the sea while the fleet raided the enemy coast.

That plan was possible only because Attica was not what fed Athens. A polis that ate what it grew could not have contemplated it; the Spartans invaded expecting a pitched battle for the fields, as any Greek army would. Athens could give up the fields because the fields were not the point, and Thucydides has Pericles say almost exactly that.

And it required concentrating a very large population into a walled circuit and a port, in summer, without sanitation, for years.

In 430 an epidemic entered through the Piraeus — the port that was, in the standard modern description, the city's sole source of food and supplies — and burned through the packed city for two years, returning in weakened form in 427.

The numbers are as follows and should be held with care. Thucydides, at 3.87, gives the losses from the military rolls: four thousand four hundred hoplites and three hundred cavalry, and an indeterminable number of the rest of the population. He adds that nothing did the Athenians so much harm, or so reduced their strength for war. Modern estimates of total mortality run from a quarter to a third of the population — sixty to a hundred thousand people on the usual population figures. Diodorus gives a quite different and much lower picture. The disease has never been identified: roughly thirty candidates have been proposed, typhoid and typhus have been most favoured, and recent ancient-DNA work on the mass grave found at the Kerameikos in the mid-1990s argues for an invasive non-typhoidal *Salmonella*, unresolved at the level of serovar.

What matters structurally is not which pathogen it was. It is that **this was a metabolic death rather than a military one.** A population living above the carrying capacity of its ground was concentrated, by its own government, in a space that could not carry it either — a decision available only because of the trade dependency, and taken as a direct consequence of it. Pericles himself died of it. It killed more Athenians than the entire first ten years of the war.

405/4: the famine

The second call is the pure form, and it is the cleanest illustration of a metabolic note in the whole corpus.

In 405 Lysander destroyed the Athenian fleet at Aegospotami and took control of the Hellespont. He then did not march on Attica. He did not have to. He sat on a strait two hundred miles away, and the grain stopped.

Athens was besieged through the winter and surrendered in the spring, having held out until — on Xenophon's account — large numbers had died of hunger. There was no assault, no storm, no massacre. The city was reduced by the severing of a single link in a chain that had been lengthening for a century.

That is the metabolic debt being settled in its exact form: a coordination that had lifted a population above its land's capacity was cut at one point, and the difference was paid in starvation over about six months.

The sword ledger

Now the other column, assembled and given with its uncertainties, which are large. Almost every figure below rests on a single ancient source with an interest.

Making it. The consolidation of Attica is prehistoric and unquantifiable. From the seventh century: the Cylonian suppliants killed at the altars around 632, and the seventy-nine manacled men in the Phaleron trenches whose connection to that episode is contested. Peisistratus's victory at Pallene in 546 was a surprise attack on men dicing in the heat of the day and was probably not costly. In 508/7, three hundred Athenian partisans of Isagoras were executed after the siege of the Acropolis.

Holding it. This is where the ledger becomes heavy, and it falls almost entirely on non-Athenians. Naxos reduced in the 460s, the first ally, as Thucydides notes, enslaved contrary to the terms of the alliance. Thasos besieged for three years; and in the same campaign ten thousand settlers sent to the Strymon destroyed by the Thracians at Drabescus — Thucydides' figure. Samos besieged for nine months in 440/39. Histiaea in 446: the population expelled and sold, two thousand Athenians settled on the ground. Aegina in 431: the population expelled, and in 424 the settled remnant at Thyrea taken and killed. Mytilene in 427: rather more than a thousand executed after the famous debate had spared the rest, the walls demolished, the ships taken, the island divided into three thousand lots. Scione in 421 and Torone in 422: the adult males killed or deported, the women and children enslaved. Melos in 416: every adult male the Athenians took was killed, the women and children sold, and settlers sent out afterwards.

And beneath all of it, continuously, the mines: twenty to thirty thousand men in shafts twenty-five to fifty metres deep, in galleries too low to stand in, whose mortality was high enough that a leasing contract had a replacement clause written into it as a term of business.

Losing it. The Egyptian expedition of the 450s ended, on Thucydides' account, with few of the whole armament surviving; the figures usually attached to it are large and are widely thought exaggerated, and no reliable total exists. The plague, above. Delium in 424 and Amphipolis in 422. Then Sicily.

Of the Sicilian expedition Thucydides wrote the sentence that stands as this ledger's epitaph: they were destroyed, as the saying is, with a total destruction, their fleet, their army — everything was destroyed, and few out of many returned home. The forces committed across three years, with allies and crews, ran to some tens of thousands; the losses cannot be totalled. What can be stated is the fate of the seven thousand taken prisoner, who were held in the stone quarries at Syracuse for eight months in the open, on a daily ration of two measures of barley meal and one of water — roughly a pint and a half-pint — and most of whom died there before the survivors were sold.

Then Arginusae in 406: the battle won, a thousand or two thousand Athenian crewmen drowned in the storm, and six of the victorious generals executed by their own assembly in a single illegal vote. Then Aegospotami in 405, where the Athenian prisoners — some three thousand, on the tradition — were put to death by Lysander after the battle. Then the famine. Then the Thirty, who killed for money and whose victims are traditionally numbered at fifteen hundred, a figure that comes from orators writing to condemn them and should be read as rhetoric.

And in 322, at the end, the property line at two thousand drachmas that struck more than twelve thousand Athenians off the register, on Diodorus's figures. No blood at all in that last transaction. Just a number.

The shape of the two columns

Two observations from setting the ledgers side by side, and they are the reason for keeping them apart.

The sword fell outward; the metabolic note fell inward. Athens killed far more foreigners than Athenians, and it killed them deliberately, as policy, in cold decisions taken by show of hands — Melos, Scione, Torone, Mytilene, Histiaea, Aegina, and the slow accountancy of the mines. Meanwhile the Athenians who died in the largest numbers were killed by a plague their own war plan concentrated, by an expedition their own assembly voted, and by a famine caused by the loss of a sea lane. The Spartan army camped in Attica for years and never took the city by storm. Sparta did not kill the Athenians. Athens's own metabolic position did.

And the two columns describe almost entirely different populations. The people Athens killed and the Athenians who died are, with the exception of the crews lost abroad, disjoint sets dying in different places by different mechanisms for different

reasons. An agrarian empire's peasantry appears in both columns — taxed, conscripted, and starved by the same order. A maritime commercial order of the Athenian type splits them, and this is worth stating as a structural claim to test: **where an order's surplus comes from trade and tribute rather than from its own soil, its sword ledger and its metabolic ledger fall on different people, and the order's own members experience its violence mainly as disease and hunger rather than as force.**

Why the forgetting was total

Which brings us to the observation the module opened with.

Athens forgot its own foundational violence with unusual speed and thoroughness, and the earlier modules recorded the mechanisms. The forced consolidation of Attica — Thucydides' word is *compelled* — became an annual festival. The conquest of Eleusis became a procession along a sacred road, with the losing families' descendants still performing the rite a thousand years later. A Bronze Age fortification became the work of giants. The alliance was still called an alliance while the tribute was being carried into the theatre and counted out in talents in front of the men who had paid it.

But the deeper forgetting is not the Athenians'. It is ours, and it has a mechanical cause.

Melos left no literature. Scione left none. Torone, Histiaea, Aegina, and the twenty-odd thousand men who dug the silver at Laurium left none. Athens left everything — the tragedies, the comedies, the histories, the philosophy, the oratory, the buildings, and the vocabulary in which the whole subject is still discussed. So the arrangement survives in the record almost entirely in the words of the people who made it, and it is known to posterity by a term describing how its members treated each other and saying nothing whatever about how they treated anyone else.

The completeness of a forgetting tracks the survival of the victims' literature, not the scale of the violence done to them. That is the proposition, and it should be uncomfortable, because it means that the historical record's silences are not distributed randomly but inversely to power — the better documented an order, the more thoroughly its own account displaces its victims'.

And the exception proves it exactly. We know what happened at Melos, and we know the arguments made for it, because an Athenian wrote them down, in a dialogue, for Athenians to read. The single most damning document about the Athenian empire is an Athenian document. Where a subject population's fate is remembered at all, it is usually because someone on the winning side thought it worth recording, and what gets recorded is what that person found interesting — which at Melos was the reasoning, not the people.

Reading the accounting against the framework

One, and it is the module's principal contribution to the metabolic idea. A trade-based metabolic dependency is not only a way of dying at the end. It is upstream of grand strategy, and it kills throughout. The usual picture of metabolic debt is terminal: coordination fails, the note is called, the surplus population dies. Athens shows the dependency operating as a live constraint on every major decision for a century, and producing its largest single mortality event in the *second year* of a twenty-seven-year war, from the strategy the dependency made possible.

Athens could abandon Attica because Attica did not feed it. Abandoning Attica meant concentrating a quarter of a million people behind two walls. That concentration is what the plague found. So the metabolic position did not merely determine how Athens would die; it determined how Athens would fight, and the fighting is what killed the Athenians. **Where a population is carried above its land's capacity by trade, the metabolic position should be read as a strategic input, not an epilogue.**

Two. Where the carrying capacity is exceeded by trade rather than by intensification, the debt is denominated in other people's soil and other people's labour, and calling it in destroys them by a different mechanism and at a different time. Athens was carried by Euboean and Pontic grain, by Laurium silver, and by bought human beings. When the coordination was disrupted at Decelea in 413, the people who moved were twenty thousand slaves walking out of the mines and workshops. When the fleet failed in 405, the people who died were the Athenian poor. Same metabolic position, two populations, two mechanisms, eight years apart. An irrigation society's collapse kills one peasantry; a trading empire's collapse kills at several removes and in a sequence.

Three, on the accounting itself. The figures in this module are almost all bad, and the pattern of their badness is informative. We have Thucydides' hoplite rolls for the plague because the state counted men who owed military service. We have no figure at all for the women, children, metics and slaves who died in the same epidemic. We have the tribute quotas in marble because a goddess held a sixtieth. We have no census of Laurium. We know seven thousand men were held in the Syracusan quarries on a measured daily ration because a historian found the detail arresting, and we do not know how many of them there were at the end. **What an order counted is what an order owed something to, or extracted something from; everyone else is a residual in somebody's sentence.** That is a methodological finding rather than a political one, and every module of this study has run into it.

Four, and the discipline. It would be easy to end a module like this by totalling the column and presenting it as a verdict. The corpus does not do that, and the arithmetic here would not support it anyway.

What can be said is narrower. An armed settlement held Attica and the Aegean for about a century and a half. It killed a great many people who were not its members, deliberately, by vote, and left the record of having done so. It killed a great many of its own members through the strategic consequences of a dependency it had chosen and could not have escaped. It lifted a quarter of a million people above the capacity of a poor peninsula and could not put them down gently when the lifting stopped. And it produced, at the same time and out of the same arrangement, the political condition described in Module 9 — which was real, which nobody else had, and which the men who died in the quarries at Syracuse had voted for.

Both columns stand. Neither cancels the other. That is the whole discipline of this project, and it is nowhere harder to hold than here.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations and figures are public-domain and verified against sources reproducing the texts, and are given with their uncertainties, which in this module are unusually large. Thucydides 3.87 for the plague losses from the rolls — four thousand four hundred hoplites, three hundred cavalry, and an indeterminable number of the rest — and 2.47–54 for the epidemic itself; 2.14–17 for the evacuation of Attica; 7.87 for the total destruction of the Sicilian expedition, the seven thousand prisoners in the quarries, the eight months, and the daily ration of two *kotylai* of grain and one of water, rendered by the older translators as a pint of barley meal and half a pint of water; 1.98 for Naxos, 1.100 and 4.102 for Thasos and the ten thousand settlers destroyed at Drabescus, 1.109–110 for Egypt, 1.114 for Histiaea, 3.50 for Mytilene, 4.57 for the Aeginetans at Thyrea, 5.32 for Scione, and 5.116 for Melos. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.2, for the famine and the surrender, and 1.7 for Arginusae. Demosthenes 20.31–32 for the four hundred thousand *medimnoi* from the Bosporus said to equal all other sources combined.

Where the evidence is contested it is given as contested. Population figures for Attica (two hundred and fifty to three hundred thousand at the height) and for the citizen body rest on the long dispute between Beloch, Gomme, Hansen and others and are indirect at every point. Plague mortality at a quarter to a third of the population is a modern estimate built on Thucydides' partial figures; Diodorus gives a substantially different and lower account; the pathogen is unidentified, with some thirty candidates proposed, typhoid and typhus long favoured, and recent ancient-DNA work on the

Kerameikos mass grave arguing for an invasive non-typhoidal *Salmonella* without resolving the serovar. The Egyptian expedition losses are Thucydides' impressionistic statement and the large round numbers attached to it in later sources are widely regarded as inflated. Drabescus at ten thousand is Thucydides' figure alone. The three thousand Athenian prisoners executed after Aegospotami rests on the tradition and varies between sources. The fifteen hundred killed by the Thirty comes from fourth-century orators writing against them and is identified as rhetorical. Diodorus 18.18 supplies the twelve thousand disenfranchised in 322. The Laurium workforce at twenty to thirty thousand follows Lauffer and the estimates descending from him and is an estimate, not a count.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Garnsey on Attic crop failure rates and on the impossibility of deriving a firm import figure from Demosthenes; Moreno on the structural shortfall of roughly eight hundred thousand *medimnoi* and on the fifth-century dependence on cleruchic surplus, especially Euboean, giving way to Pontic grain in the fourth — a disagreement between two specialists that is reported rather than adjudicated; Lauffer on Laurium; the epidemiological literature on the plague, including the recent aDNA work, cited for its inconclusiveness as much as its conclusions. The cleruchies, the tribute, the mines, the slave desertion at Decelea, and the collapse sequence were established in Modules 2, 5, 6 and 10 and are used here for their metabolic bearing rather than re-argued.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

THE SCHOOL OF HELLAS

Module 12 · Convergence and divergence — where Athens is an ordinary case and where it is not; what the pairing with Sparta actually tested; the two distinctions this study deposits in the framework; and the strongest case against everything above, stated in full and answered

Where Athens is ordinary

The first thing to establish is how much of this case was generic, because the temptation with Athens runs entirely the other way.

The order was a former conquest naturalised past recognition. Attica was not a natural unit that discovered itself; it was a dozen self-governing communities whose council-chambers and magistracies were dissolved and whose people were, in Thucydides' word, *compelled* to use one city. By 600 that had become a festival. A Bronze Age fortification on the Acropolis had become the work of giants. Eleusis had been beaten and absorbed, and its priestly families were still performing the winning state's most prestigious rite a thousand years later. Nothing in this is peculiar to Athens; it is what the corpus finds everywhere, and Athens simply provides an unusually well-documented instance of a completed build.

The settlement was a distribution of somebody's land to somebody's supporters. Chalcis in 506, Histiaea, Aegina, Lesbos, Melos: land taken by force and dealt out by lot, with the previous owners in some cases left farming it and rendering annually to an absentee holder in Attica. The instrument is the corpus's own, joint for joint.

Extraction was sorted by membership, and the form of the levy marked the sorting. A tax on transactions for the citizen, a tax on the person for the metic, a tribute assessed by others for the subject city. Read the fiscal structure alone and the whole order of belonging can be reconstructed from it.

The default held by alignment rather than agreement. Men who despised each other coordinated for a century because each of them, defending his own position, defended the whole; and it broke when the arithmetic crossed over for one group with standing and means.

And structural change came only from above. Every constitutional change in two hundred years traces to elite fracture, elite exhaustion, or foreign conquest. The largest

slave population in the Greek world never rose. The most politically capable poor citizenry in the ancient world never once initiated a change.

That is a great deal of convergence, and it is the necessary preface to the divergences, because the divergences only mean something against it.

Where Athens is not ordinary, and what the difference consists of

Six things in this case behaved unlike anything else in the corpus, and on inspection they reduce to two.

The robe was worn by the people who wove it. In every colonial case the legitimating story is cut for the metropole, whose belief funds and mans the thing, and not for the conquered, whose belief the floor does not need. Athens collapses metropole and army into one body of men sitting on one hill, and the consequence is not more honesty but a different economy of honesty: no fiction was manufactured at all. The seizure of Chalcidian land was announced as a seizure, the prisoners' fetters were hung on the Acropolis, and a verse was cut on a bronze chariot about quenching insolence in chains of iron. Pericles could stand in the assembly and call the empire a tyranny. **Where the audience whose belief is load-bearing does not require the conversion, none is performed.**

The formation was total, and it was not taught. Athens had no state school, no curriculum, no clergy, and one law about schoolrooms whose entire content was keeping grown men out of them. What formed the Athenian was the rota: five hundred on the Council with a two-term lifetime cap, several hundred magistracies recycled annually, six thousand jurors, and a day-chairmanship of the state held by lot for one night and one day and never twice, which on the standard arithmetic something like half of all Athenian citizens held at some point in their lives.

The floor was a mobilisation, not an apparatus. No garrison, no standing army pointed inward, no police beyond three hundred publicly owned foreigners with staves. The one man who tried to build an apparatus had to get the weapons out of the houses by a trick, and the one regime that later succeeded needed a Spartan garrison on the rock to do it.

The liberties took the participation form rather than the protection form. Cleisthenes did not grant the demos a right; he made the demos the Council. Ephialtes did not shield anyone from the Areopagus; he moved its jurisdiction into courts the demos staffed. Pericles did not promise access; he paid for it.

The order occupied the entire gradient at once. Conviction for the citizen, market exchange for the metic, deterrence for the ally, raw coercion for the slave — all simultaneous, all voted by the same assembly, sorted by a line drawn in a deme register.

And the two ledgers fell on different populations. The sword fell outward, on Melos and Scione and Mytilene and the men in the mines. The metabolic note fell inward, on Athenians dying of a plague their own war plan concentrated and a famine their own sea route's loss produced.

The two distinctions

Those six reduce to two, and the two are the same distinction seen from opposite sides. This is what the study deposits.

On the force side: an apparatus versus a mobilisation. An apparatus is a standing armed body with a payroll and a command, whose composition its holders choose and will choose to bind to themselves. A mobilisation is the population itself, temporarily armed, assembled when needed and dispersed after, whose composition nobody chooses because the decisive weapon dictates it. Bronze armour selects the men who can buy bronze. A hull with a hundred and seventy oars selects everyone, and needs them again next spring.

Everything distinctive about the Athenian floor follows from that. The absence of an inward-pointing coercive apparatus, because there was nothing standing to point. The periodicity that converted an episodic bargaining position into a standing account. The veto that broke the Four Hundred in four months, because the arm was in commission at Samos drawing its own pay. And the specific vulnerability that ended it: **an arm that must be hired every year can be outbid**, which is why Athens lost the Aegean not to a defeat but to a sixth of a drachma granted at a dinner party in Sardis.

On the liberty side: a protection versus a participation. A protection is a substantive guarantee granted by a power that retains the capacity to withdraw it, and typically does once the faction that extracted it declines. A participation is a share of the granting power itself, and it cannot be withdrawn without the consent of those who now hold it.

Everything distinctive about Athenian liberty follows from that. Its survival of two oligarchic coups with restoration inside a year on both occasions. The requirement, at the end, of a Macedonian garrison and a property line to end it. And its characteristic failure mode: because the beneficiaries were the enforcement mechanism, the protections were near-perfect against officials and worthless against the assembled majority in a bad week, which is what six generals discovered in 406 when the crowd shouted that it was monstrous for the people to be prevented from doing whatever they wished.

And the two are one observation. **In both cases the durable form is the one in which the beneficiary *is* the mechanism rather than being served by it.** A

mobilisation cannot be turned against the population because it is the population. A participation cannot be revoked by the granting power because the beneficiary is inside it. Where a corpus case shows an armed force held by someone, or a right granted to someone, expect brittleness in the first and revocability in the second — and where it shows the population constituting the force, or holding a share of the granting power, expect the thing to compound.

That is the study's contribution, and every module's smaller finding hangs off one branch or the other.

The pairing, and what it actually tested

This study was set up as the positive control for a hypothesis carried over from Sparta: that liberty tracks the manning requirement of the decisive arm. Where the floor can be worked by a few, the few owe nobody anything; where it can only be worked by the many, the many acquire a price.

The verdict is: **correct in outline, wrong in mechanism, and the corrected version is more useful.**

The outline holds when the two cases are set side by side. Sparta's decisive arm was a shrinking body of self-equipping hoplites over a conquered helot majority that shared a language, a country and a memory of the conquest; it needed a permanent formation apparatus to make the position bearable, a secret police to manage the helots, and it produced no liberty at all. Athens's decisive arm was a mass wage mobilisation over a servile population bought from a dozen nations and dispersed in ones and twos; it needed no apparatus, formed its citizens by employing them, and produced the most extensive popular liberty in the ancient world. The correlation is real.

But the mechanism is not the one proposed, and 508/7 is what breaks it. Twenty-eight years before Salamis, with no fleet in existence and no naval wage, the Athenian demos besieged a Spartan king on the Acropolis and forced him out of Attica — having already been recruited weeks earlier by a losing aristocrat who needed a following larger than his rival's. The leverage existed before the technology that is supposed to have created it. So the manning requirement did not create the demos's political weight.

What it created was **periodicity and a veto.** An armed crowd wins a day and goes home; nothing gets built around a victory. A fleet is a standing annual account — the same men, in the same numbers, wanted again every spring, findable only if willing, useful only if practised, payable only in coin. Institutions grow around recurring obligations. And when the elite finally defected in 411, the arm they could not take was the one thing that made the defection reversible.

Which yields the general form, and it is testable across the corpus: **the manning requirement of the decisive arm does not produce liberty; it produces a standing account and a veto, and the veto is exercisable only when the manned arm is somewhere the plotters are not.** Had the fleet been beached in the Piraeus in the summer of 411, the Four Hundred would probably have held. The most important constitutional fact of that year was a question of geography.

And one further comparative finding the pairing produced, which neither case shows alone. **Athens's slave system was safer than Sparta's precisely because it was more completely commodified.** Sparta's unfree were a people; Athens's were a market. The Athenian citizen's freedom from an internal apparatus and the Athenian slave's inability to coordinate are not two facts about Attica. They are one fact.

The strongest case against everything above

Now the objection, and it deserves to be stated at its full strength rather than in a form convenient to answer.

It runs like this.

You have spent twelve modules establishing that the Athenians were not saints. Nobody claimed they were. Every state in the Aegean did what Athens did, or wanted to and lacked the means. Sparta held Messenia and killed helots as a matter of policy. Corinth and Chalcis planted colonies on other people's coasts. Syracuse ran a tyranny and worked prisoners to death in quarries. Persia held Ionia. The empire is the generic term in your equation — it is what any Greek state with a fleet would have built, and several tried. To spend a study on it is to spend a study on the least interesting thing about the case.

Meanwhile the thing that actually requires explanation you have systematically dissolved. A poor man could sit in judgement on a general and vote to fine him. A man's body could not be pledged for a loan or broken to produce evidence. A farmer from Rhamnous could hold the seal of the state for a night. Six thousand jurors, drawn by lot and paid, could not be overruled by anyone. A citizen could stand in the theatre and call the most powerful man in the city a thief, by name, at a state festival, and take first prize. None of that existed anywhere else in the ancient Mediterranean, and almost none of it existed anywhere at all for the next two thousand years, and your account of it is that it was residue — the accidental leavings of quarrels between rich men about which of them would lead.

That account is unfalsifiable and therefore worthless. Any concession can be redescribed as a faction's manoeuvre; any principle can be traced back to somebody's advantage; any achievement can be dissolved into the interests that happened to converge on it. And having dissolved it you have explained nothing, because the question was never whether

Pericles had motives — everyone has motives — but why this particular arrangement, alone, produced a form of political life that the species had not managed before and would not manage again for a hundred generations. To that question your method is structurally deaf.

And it is deaf in a way that flatters its own knowingness. You end Module 9 saying that the liberty was real and that this does not diminish it. But the whole architecture of the study says otherwise: the empire is treated as the cause and the liberty as the effect, the tribute as the substance and the constitution as the froth. Pericles told the Athenians their city was the school of Hellas — the education of Greece — and posterity has agreed with him for twenty-four centuries, including every people who has ever tried to build something like it. Your study cannot account for that agreement except as a mistake.

That is the case. It is not stupid and it is not merely sentimental, and a good deal of it is correct.

The answer

Take the correct parts first, because they are substantial.

The empire is generic and the objection is right about that. Nothing in the Athenian floor requires explanation by anything peculiar to Athens. Sparta held a subject people, Corinth planted colonies, Syracuse ran quarries, Persia collected tribute. The corpus finds the same instruments everywhere, and Modules 1 through 6 largely confirm that Athens is an ordinary case in an unusual medium. **The conclusion the objection should draw from this, and does not, is that Athens's exceptionality lies exactly where the study says it does — not in what it did to others, which was normal, but in what it did among itself, which was not.**

And the objection is right that the study must not pretend the achievement was small. It was not small. It was, on the evidence assembled here, the largest transfer of political capacity to ordinary men in the ancient record, and it was real in the only sense that matters: it changed what a poor man's week contained. That must be said flatly and it has been.

Now the part the objection gets wrong, and it is one thing.

It treats the liberty and the empire as two separate facts about Athens — one admirable, one regrettable — and asks to be judged on the first. They were not two facts. They were one arrangement, and the study's work has been to trace the joints.

Follow the money through the achievement, item by item. The naval wage that made the poorest citizen decisive was paid out of tribute assessed at Athens and collected by Athenian officers. The jury pay that made him a judge — the single

institution without which none of the rest functions, because an unpaid poor man cannot sit — was proposed by a politician who had been outspent by a rival and was advised to give the multitude what was their own, out of a treasury the allies had filled. The land some of them held was Chalcidian and Lesbian and Aeginean. The grain that fed a population well above what Attica could carry came from cleruchic estates on other people's islands and later from the Pontic steppe, bought with silver dug by twenty to thirty thousand purchased foreigners in shafts fifty metres deep, and delivered along a sea lane the fleet existed to hold open. The festivals that formed him, and fed him beef by deme quota, were funded from the same source, and the subject cities were required by decree to walk in them carrying a cow and a suit of armour, in the manner of colonists.

Remove the empire and you do not get Athenian democracy minus a regrettable annexe. You get a poor Attic farmer on a plot too small to keep a household, which is precisely what Athens had in 600 and had again after 322.

But — and this is where the answer must not flinch in the opposite direction either **— that does not make the democracy the empire's domestic face, and 508 forbids saying so.** The demos was a political force before the fleet existed. The register, the demes, the Council of Five Hundred, and the word *isonomia* all precede Salamis. So the honest formulation, which is neither the objection's nor its cynical opposite, is this:

The Athenian democracy was not caused by the empire. Its radical form — paid, universal, continuous, professionalised participation, sustained daily for a century and a half — was funded by it, and the funding is not separable from the thing funded. A man cannot sit on a jury for a hundred days a year unless somebody pays him for those days, and the somebody was Samos.

Which answers the charge of unfalsifiability as well. The study's claim is not the vacuous one that everyone has motives. It is a specific empirical claim with a specific shape, and it was tested and could have failed. It predicted that where a group was let in there would be a faction that needed it, and the record produced four cases in the sources' own words — a stalemate, a man *being worsted*, a reform passed while the rival's army was abroad, and a politician *beaten in the matter of private possessions*. It predicted that a group nobody needed would stay out however much it deserved in, and the metics — taxed, resident for generations, serving as hoplites, rowing at Arginusae, writing the city's philosophy — stayed out for two hundred years. And it predicted that the door would open the moment need appeared, and at Arginusae, with the city out of men, slaves were put on the benches and freed for it. That is a claim that made predictions and could have been embarrassed by the evidence. It was not.

On the school of Hellas. Pericles said the whole city was the education of Greece, and the objection is right that posterity has agreed with him. The study can account for that agreement without calling it a mistake.

What Athens taught, and what everyone since has been trying to copy, is precisely the participation form: not a charter of protections granted by a power, but a share in the deciding held by the people it decides about. That is the durable instrument, and Athens discovered it — not by designing it, but because four aristocrats in difficulty each happened to pay in the only currency their situation made available. The discovery is not diminished by having been accidental. Most discoveries are.

And what Athens also taught, and what has been copied at least as faithfully, is the arithmetic underneath: that such an arrangement is expensive, that its expense has to be met from somewhere, and that the easiest somewhere is a population outside the register that pays and does not vote. Every subsequent order that has combined a broad domestic franchise with an external empire has run the same books, and has told itself the same two stories in the same two rooms — the funeral oration at home and, abroad, the Athenian envoys at Melos explaining that the strong do what they can.

The school of Hellas taught both lessons. It is not the study's fault that the second one has been the better learned.

Coda: where the reader is standing

One last thing, and the framework asks for it.

This study will have been harder to read than the colonial ones, and the difficulty is not evidential. Every reader of the corpus is at some distance from Buganda or Tonkin or the Kenyan highlands, and can hold the arithmetic without feeling implicated in it. Nobody is at a distance from Athens. The vocabulary in which the whole subject is conducted — democracy, politics, citizen, tyranny, economy, history itself — is Attic Greek, and the reader is inside it while reading about it. That is not an accident of education; it is the last and most complete instance of the finding in Module 11. Athens left the record and Melos did not, so the arrangement is described to us in the words of the men who made it, and those words have become the words in which description happens.

Naming that is not a debunking of anything. The Athenians were not deceiving posterity; they were writing for each other, and posterity found the papers. But it does mean that a reader who feels the counter-position of the previous section rising in him as he reads should notice that the feeling is doing something — that it is the position speaking, and that the position was built by people with an interest in it, a long time ago, and has become the furniture of a room he was born in.

Both columns stand. The poor Athenian really could judge a general, and the men in the quarries at Syracuse really were given two measures of grain and one of water a day for eight months, and the same assembly voted for both, on different afternoons, with the same hands.

A note on sources.

The primary quotations in this module were all established and sourced in the modules they came from, and are used here without re-argument. Thucydides 2.41.1 supplies the title, in the Greek *τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν εἶναι* — that the city as a whole is the education, or school, of Greece — verified against the Greek text and the standard renderings, and subject as always to Thucydides' own statement at 1.22.1 that the speeches give what the occasion required rather than what was said. Thucydides 2.15.2 for the compulsion of the Attic communities into one city; 2.63.2 for the empire held as a tyranny; 5.89 for the Melian position; 7.87 for the quarries and the ration; 8.48, 8.53–54 and 8.75–76 for the crossover, the vote for oligarchy, and the fleet at Samos. Herodotus 5.66.2 for Cleisthenes being worsted, 5.77 for the Chalcis settlement and the epigram, 5.78 for the passage on equality. *Athenaion Politeia* 27.3–4 for jury pay as a counter to Cimon's wealth and the advice to give the multitude what was their own; 37 for the disarming by the Thirty; 44.1 for the day-chairmanship. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.5.6–7 for the added obol, 1.7 for Arginusae, 2.2.23 for the walls and the flutes; *Ways and Means* 4.14–17 for the mine leases. Demosthenes 20.31–32 for the grain figures, with Garnsey's scepticism and Moreno's reconstruction both noted as in Module 11. IG I^3 71 for the cow and panoply and the processing in the manner of colonists.

The comparative material on Sparta draws on the companion study in this collection and on the standard accounts of helotage, the *agoge* and *oliganthropia*; it is used for structural contrast and no Spartan primary source is quoted here. The characterisation of the counter-position in the penultimate section is this module's own composition and is not attributed to any named scholar, though its elements will be recognised from the long tradition running from Isocrates through Grote to the modern defences of Athenian democracy; it is stated as strongly as the author could make it, which is the discipline the project requires, and readers who think it can be put more strongly still should do so and test the answer against the stronger version.

Figures and disputes flagged in earlier modules stand as flagged there and are not re-litigated: the population of Attica, the plague mortality, the Solonian census figures, the size of Themistocles' programme, the totals of the 425/4 reassessment, the date and substance of the Standards Decree, the date of the *ephebeia*, the authenticity of the

dikastic oath, and the numbers killed by the Thirty and disenfranchised in 322. Where this module states a finding drawn from an earlier one, the qualifications entered there travel with it.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*